

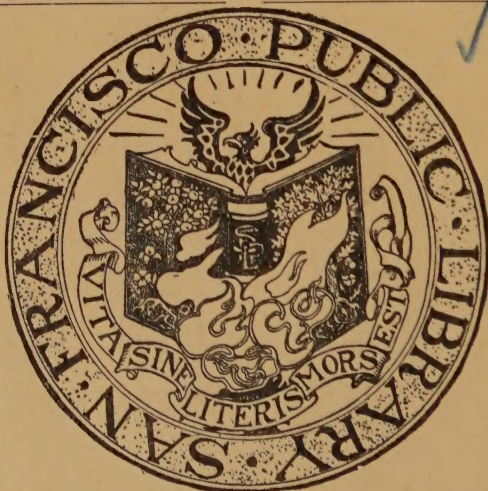


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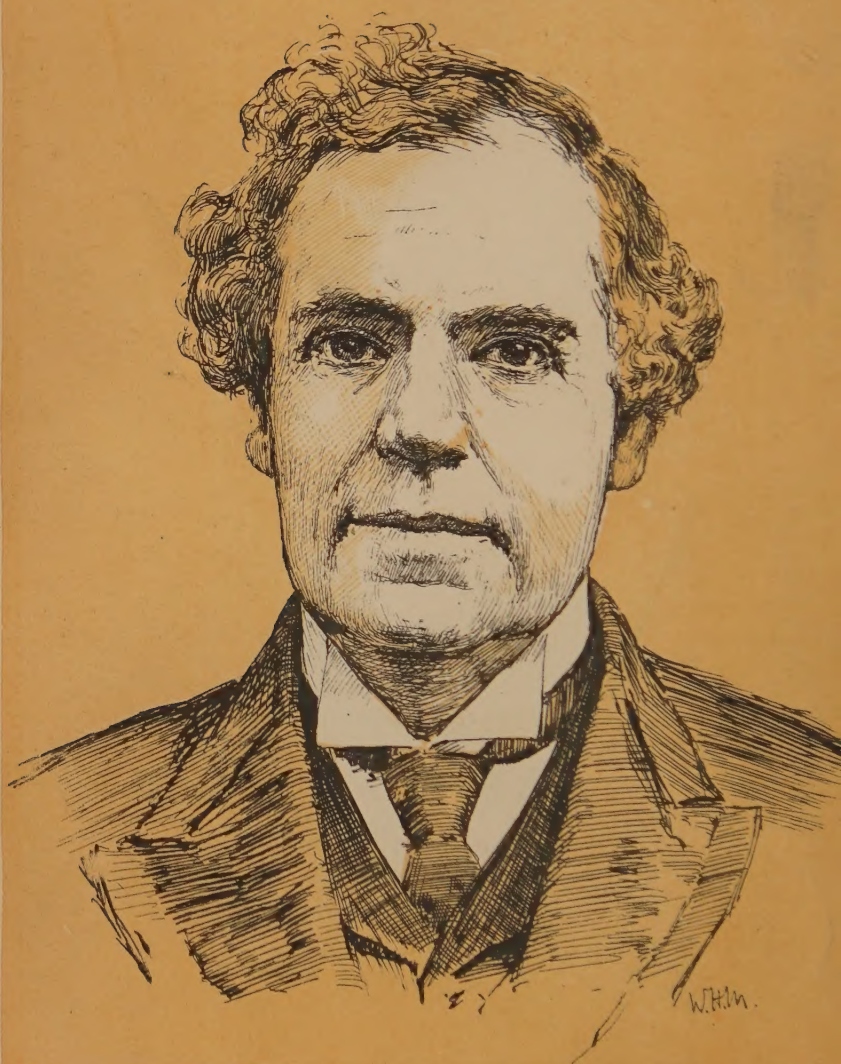
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J. L. Toole

REMINISCENCES
OF
J. L. TOOLE

RELATED BY HIMSELF, AND CHRONICLED BY

JOSEPH HATTON

*Author of "Clytie," "Cruel London," "The Gay World," "Christopher
Kenrick," "Journalistic London," &c.*

ILLUSTRATED BY ALFRED BRYAN AND W. H. MARGETSON

Third Edition.

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PREFACE.

WHAT a different thing talking is compared with writing! I am on tour when I jot down this profound reflection. My dear friend Joseph Hatton has been on my track since we parted in town, a month or two ago, with this one message, by post and telegram—"You ought to write the Preface, every word of it!" As it is my own Preface of course I ought, and of course I have done so. But while the writing of it has been a labour of love, it has bothered me a good deal more than a labour of love is supposed to do.

Many times I have admired the skill with which my collaborator has written, in these pages, stories which seemed to me to require, for a complete narration, the point one puts into an anecdote when acting it. I am occasionally called upon to make a speech in public. Well, I get along now and then pretty well, thanks to the inspiration that seems to come to me from the friendly sympathy of my audience; but there is no inspiration in a blank sheet of paper, and there is no applause in pens and ink. When one makes a speech one seeks kindly faces around one, and it is wonderful what assistance there is in a little applause. You take up the report of a speech in a newspaper; you see that it is peppered with "Laughter,"

"Applause," "Loud cheers," and so on ; that sets you reading it, and carries you on to the end. It is very much the same with a speaker ; he makes his little joke, and there is a laugh, which helps him to his next ; then he says a nice thing about the occasion, and gets a round of applause ; that helps him on his road to the climax, when he hopes to finish up, and mostly does—with a burst of enthusiasm. What I am coming to is an emphasis of my original point—the tremendous difference between speaking and writing.

Sitting down in cold blood, as it were, to introduce these Reminiscences, I feel that I can only be more or less formal in my expressions of diffidence, hoping I don't intrude, and so on. Hatton says, "Make the Preface a speech, if you like." But how can I make a speech to an audience whom I cannot see ? It would be like speaking into a phonograph. If there were any applause, one would have to make it oneself. That would be the worst kind of *claque* imaginable. If our public speaking of the future is to be done in this way, what is to become of the personal magnetism of the orator ? Nevertheless, I am told by scientific forecasters that fifty years hence a public speaker will simply address his phonograph, and send the cylinders to be reeled off on the platform of St. James's Hall, or wherever the great meeting may be held, while he remains comfortably at home or spends the evening at his club, to read in due course a full report of his speech in the newspapers. It will be a curious change in the administration of public affairs. There will, however, be one great advantage—to a speaker ; his remarks will assuredly be correctly reported, because, of course, his phonographic cylinders will be handed to the Press, and the printers will set up their types from the voice itself. This may be

a little awkward where other speeches are being set up into type. The noise of a lot of phonograms being reeled off at the same time must be rather confusing; but, of course, if that is so, they will invent something to meet the case. As long as they don't invent phonographic theatres, with all the good actors and good plays of an entire season thrown into the purchase of a fireside instrument, it does not much matter. But I am diverging. Let us get back to the point where the phonograph interrupted us.

It was Hatton's last resort to follow me up with the suggestion, "Make it a speech." I was having a holiday at Aix, but the shadow of the Preface fell upon me even at the Kursaal. I went to Lucerne, where our friend Irving was staying, and the thought of this address to the reader added a deeper shadow, in my estimation, to the natural reflections of the lake. I had to go to Lucerne to give Irving my ideas upon some new readings in *Macbeth*. I am bound to say they were not received with the gravity one is accustomed to in tragedians. But that is neither here nor there, and I fear I am again digressing. It is astonishing what you can do under pressure. It was not my idea to write these Reminiscences; it was not Hatton's idea; it was the outcome of a request from Mr. Tillotson, the great Literary "Syndic" who supplies the Newspaper Press with the works of Wilkie Collins, William Black, Miss Braddon, Rider Haggard, Mrs. Oliphant, Walter Besant, and the other leading novelists of the day. It was Tillotson who said to my collaborator, "Why not the Reminiscences of Toole for a change?" And Hatton of course said, "Why not?"—as well he might, seeing that he had already been making a few notes about me, in, however, such a vague kind of way that

they would have come to nothing but for the stimulus of Tillotson's desire to introduce into his literary wares the truth that is "stranger than fiction;" a stimulus which fixed Hatton to dates of production, and which made me the slave of Hatton; the willing slave, I am ready to admit, for we are old friends, we have sympathies in common; and it has been a great and novel delight to me to see these chapters grow under the expert's hand, to read the proofs, and to have my words and anecdotes, my ideas and notions photographed in type.

If the readers only enjoy the story that follows as much as I have enjoyed telling it to my collaborator, and as much as he says he has enjoyed writing it, we shall be a happy family of authors and readers. You know how it is when you make a speech; you often think of the clever things you could have said after you have sat down. It is similar with *Reminiscences*, as you will discover when you come to tell your own story, as of course you will tell it. Everybody is relating his *reminiscences* nowadays, and a capital form of literature it is. "How do you do? When are your *reminiscences* coming out?" will, I expect, become a regular form of social salutation soon; very much better too than always beginning conversations with the weather. I am continually thinking of something I ought to have said in the chapters that are closed, and I hope those of my friends who expect me to relate all the incidents in which they are interested will forgive me if they are disappointed. I have had many letters pointing out things I ought to have mentioned during the run of the *Reminiscences*, and I have made additions and corrections here and there, and with much satisfaction; but I cannot remem-

ber every boy who was at school with me, nor every man I have met since ; nor is it necessary to record all the circumstances under which I have written orders for the play. Moreover, I have not had it quite all my own way in these records, and I offer this fact as an additional explanation and apology for sundry omissions. It was not merely with a desire to tell my story that Hatton donned his literary gear ; but to interest and amuse the public. If he had settled down into the regular groove of biographical narrative, with all its solemnities of dates, with its records of school-days, its early ambitions, its little battles, and its big disappointments, its diary notes and its copies of letters from celebrities and others, you would not have been coaxed through four hundred and fifty pages as you will now, nor would you have had as characteristic a sketch of a career in which so many of you, my good and kind friends, have shown so much generous and tender interest.

There are plenty of shortcomings in these pages. Hatton frequently speaks of them. But he is always very modest about his work. I have one feeling in regard to this book we have produced together, which I think the reader and the critic will endorse ; it is not pretentious, and it is not dull. Our united object has been to try and consider the readers more than ourselves. We both hope that critics and readers will take the work for what it professes to be, not what they think it should have been. For my own part, I shall always look back to the days of its production as a very pleasant, happy time, shadowed, as all happy times are, by sorrowful memories and incidents ; but happy as this world goes, and made the happier by friendly letters and journalistic compliments which, from week to week, have signalized its serial publication, and by

the confident hope that the complete work will be received with equal favour by the general public, to whom no man living has more reason to be grateful than

J. L. TOOLE.

On Tour, October, 1888.

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REMINISCENCES

OF

J. L. TOOLE, THE COMEDIAN,

I.

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

An unlooked-for pleasure—Prefatory remarks—A word to the reader—Reminiscences of a red-letter night and the story of some yellow tickets—"It does make me so wild!"—Toole and Sothern—A chop in the city—Mrs. Howard Paul—"Didn't I tell thee so!"—Toole and Irving studying character—A sorrowful incident with a happy ending—The Chestnut Bell.

I.

"TOOLE—For One Night Only!"

Such was the legend that smiled at me from the walls and windows of a little West Midland town one memorable day in the autumn of eighteen hundred and seventy-eight.

When I say the legend smiled, I speak advisedly. Mr. Toole's provincial posters have a physiognomy of their own, and it is humorous. Perhaps you may not think that placards have characteristics that suggest their individual authors? Examine the first advertising hoarding you come across and see if they have not. Professor Herkomer tried to ennoble bill-sticking, but the art that conceals art was absent from his example of a "bold advertisement." His classic maidens looked scornfully down upon the flaring posters around them. Above their business, (advertising is a business), they were overshadowed by their commonplace neighbours.

No, you cannot level advertising up to the ideal of Professor Herkomer; yet it is possible to give a few printed words as much public force as if you decorated them with studies from the marble halls of Alma Tadema, or the frescoed graces of Sir Frederic Leighton. Mr. Toole's writing on the walls of the little town which we are discussing needed not the aid of pictorial artifice. The frank, honest, open statement "Toole—For One Night Only" eclipsed the surrounding placards. It shone in their midst like a talisman, and "it acted like a charm." The genial burgesses acknowledged it with nods of welcome; and in the stranger who had just entered their gates they had one who heartily sympathized with their pleasant humour. The unexpected announcement of the comedian's presence made me as happy as if I had "come into money."

It was what the English *impressario* calls a "one-night" and his American contemporary a "one-horse" town. To this day Mr. Toole loves his one-night towns. In the course of his travels he has swept the United Kingdom, big cities and small, busy towns and slow; from London to John-o'-Groats; from John-o'-Groats to Land's End; from Edinburgh to the Western Islands; from Dublin to Kerry; from ancient Chester to the newest seaside resort of the glorious Principality of Wales. He will act with as much personal satisfaction before the unsophisticated audience of a rural borough as he will to a critical crowd in London.

When they knew at the hotel that I was only anxious to have my dinner served quickly, because I wished to present myself among the first at the doors of the Assembly Rooms to see "Toole for one night only," my commands were received with exceptional cordiality. I stood at the hotel

door and smoked a cigarette ; I then went into the bar for that pernicious "sherry and bitters" which is supposed in English hotels to be the proper prologue to dinner ; and on all hands the people were talking of Toole. Recalling the incident in later years, I am reminded of the Anglo-Florentine novelist's "Pascarel." Verona in frescoed state stands out from the mist, and I hear the cry of "*Pascaréllo ! Pascarél !*" Not that there is the faintest likeness between the Veglione masquer and the English comedian, except in the popularity of his name among the people. I have known the time when the placarded intimation, "Toole is Coming," would create quite as much real commotion in a provincial town as the excitement that prevailed when the streets of the City of Lilies echoed to the cry of "*Pascaréllo !*" They take the announcement more calmly now, in the little worlds outside London, than they did in those days, but they have for Mr. Toole a no less sincere welcome, and he is still their devoted servant.

II.

HE is ever the prince of humorists who can cry as well as laugh. Robson was a low comedian, but he is chiefly remembered for his serious comedy and his flashes of tragic power. Toole is best known in London as the spirit of farce and burlesque. In the provinces they are not content only to spend merry evenings with him ; they love his "Uncle Dick," his "Caleb Plummer," his "Michael Garner ;" and it is not alone upon the stage that the famous comedian exhibits his double gift of fun and pathos ; it is the reflection of his own sympathetic nature, a capacity to feel the tender emotions of the mind as well as

the excitement of mirth and gaiety. Much of Mr. Toole's personal popularity may be traced to these qualities. His work has always been artistic and honest. He has been a leading star in London and the provinces for the best part of his life. No actor has been more honoured by men whose friendship is a distinction and an endorsement of character. No actor is more respected by his professional brethren, nor more sincerely beloved by the great mass of playgoers. He possesses a fund of natural humour, and is the life and soul of any company which has the good fortune to have him for host or guest.

The writer who undertakes to give an account of Mr. Toole's life and work, his clever stories, his unrehearsed jests, and his career in general, has no easy task, except when he appeals to those who know how the humorous comedian tells a story, how he acts it, how he imitates the person in the narrative, and who know the mobility of his facial endowments, and his many humorous and delightful idiosyncrasies. There is no more familiar figure in all England than that of Mr. Toole, and many who read these volumes will be able to put into his stories the personal colour, the twinkle of the eye, the twist of the mouth, the quiet chuckle, which belong to the Toole individuality.

It was Mr. Toole's peculiar mimetic faculty which first brought him upon the stage; but we will discuss this and other incidents of his early life by-and-by. In the present work the chronicler does not begin at the beginning. Such a proceeding would not be in keeping with his subject (Mr. Toole is nothing unless he is discursive and "fancy free") and under present circumstances it would also be highly inconvenient.

III.

“TOOLE—For One Night Only!”

I had several reasons to be delighted with the advent of the famous comedian at the little West Midland town. Firstly, I, too, was there for one night only; secondly, Mr. Toole was my intimate friend; and thirdly, I had been commissioned by the editor of a certain London newspaper to contribute to his “Portrait Gallery” of Pen-and-ink Sketches a word-picture of Mr. Toole.

“Interviewing” was at that time only just coming into journalistic fashion. Mr. Edmund Yates had grafted a literary shoot of the American idea upon the *World*; I had done something in this way for *Harper's Magazine* and the *Times* of New York; and M. Blowitz had exploited “the Yankee notion” in several personal chronicles for the *Times* of London. Otherwise the English Press was very properly fighting shy of the sort of thing which had made itself offensively known in this country as an “Interview;” but the true art of both journalism and criticism is to seize upon what is good in every new method of work, and not to condemn the whole of a thing, whatever it may be, because part of it is bad, or, as in the case of “Interviewing,” because of an ignorant abuse of it. If we in England are slow to make changes in our established institutions, our unanimity is delightful when the day of conversion arrives; and if the principle which governs our public criticism is eminently conservative, it is also eminently honest, and in the end eminently correct.

“Toole—For One Night Only!”

Such a unique opportunity for combining business with pleasure had rarely offered itself in my literary and journalistic experience. Over a brace

of birds and a glass of Madeira, I resolved that I would fulfil the commission of a certain London editor, and not only make the pen-and-ink sketch he required, but "Interview" the subject thereof at the same time; and I mention this at the outset of these Reminiscences because that Interview may be said to be the origin of this work, and it certainly has suggested to me the form and method of its literary construction.

IV.

THOSE who know Mr. Toole, need not be told that he is not, in his private affairs, what the world calls a methodical person; not one of those busy men who find time to keep diaries of the follies and backslidings of the great people they meet; not a secret historian of the events of his time, nor an epistolary recorder of his own life and adventures. As in his charities he is the last man in the world to let his left hand know what his right hand doeth, so, in the matter of his career, it is a blank as far as his own notes of it are concerned. Therefore, in this account of memories, of anecdotes, of work and play, of mirth and sorrow (we do not always wear the cap and bells) the literary form of the modern "Interview" is of all methods the best for our present purpose; and by way of the encouragement which belongs to the example of success, it has for its precursors, "Medwin's Conversations with Lord Byron," and the chronicles of "Henry Irving's Impressions of America."

Mr. Toole agrees with the recorder hereof in this view of his Reminiscences. A combination of narrative and conversation has, for the reader, the advantage of making him more of a party to the business than is the case with the established autobiographical method; he takes his place, as

it were, in the conversations, and is invited to participate in the dramatic incidents as they are narrated; as I invite him now to go back with me to that autumn evening ten years ago, when, together, we will see Mr. Toole in several characters, not only on the stage but off, not only as a popular actor, but as one of the most ingenious and ingenuous of jesters.

“Toole—For One Night Only!”

I have said that I was destined to remain in that pleasant little town until the next day. It seemed to me, when I went forth into the streets, as if all the county was there. The hotel had become suddenly crowded with guests. Carriages were setting down ladies and gentlemen at the Assembly Rooms in a continuous stream. I wandered round to the back of the hall in search of the stage-door. I could discover no entrance of the kind, and returning to the front, found the hero of the evening, himself, trying to pass the magic portals of the extemporised theatre. The programme commenced with a short piece in which the star did not appear. I understood the situation at once. Toole had come quietly down to take his place in the entertainment at eight o'clock, and had just made the uncomfortable discovery that there was no way to the stage except through the front of the house. Standing aside within the shadow of the porchway or awning, I witnessed a little original comedy, in which Mr. Toole was engaged for his own especial edification, and which enabled me to open that pen-and-ink sketch with an anecdote—the very best way to begin anything, I believe, if the story is only worth the telling.

“Do you say you *can't* let me in?” Toole was saying, as I arrived upon the scene.

“Not without a yellow ticket,” replied a hot

and excited policeman—one of those big burly countrymen who know their duty and stand by it.

Toole glues his eye-glass into his right eye, and contemplates the bustle with evident satisfaction.

“Yellow tickets this way!” is the policeman’s constant cry.

The yellows are the high and mighty county folk; they belong to the reserved seats.



“YELLOW TICKET THIS WAY.”

Toole, turning his collar up, now presents himself to the janitor of the yellow seats in another character, and endeavours to push his way in.

“Yellow tickets this way,” says the policeman, looking in an opposite direction, but firmly obstructing Toole.

“I must go in,” says Toole; “I can’t come to-morrow night.”

"To-morrow night!" exclaims the policeman with disdain, "it would be no good if you could."

"How's that?" asks Toole.

"Why, he won't be here to-morrow night."

"Who won't?"

"Why this 'ere Toole. Yellow tickets this way!"

"Not be here to-morrow night!" says Toole; "then I really *must* go in; and that's all about it!"

"Now it ain't no good a-shovin', mister! You can't go in here without a yellow ticket; why don't 'e try t'other door?" Then in a louder key—"Yellow tickets this way!"

Toole looks at his watch, chuckles quietly to himself, waits until the last of a family party has been ushered within the hall, and then returns to the attack.

"I say, look here," he says, making a serious effort to be confidential with the officer, "I don't mind telling you, but this 'ere Toole can't act unless I am there."

"Oh, now you, mister, please don't go on a-botherin' me."

"*But I must go on a-botherin' you!*" Toole replies; "I curls his hair; he can't go on the stage without I curls his hair; I'm his barber."

"His barber! Curls his hair!" exclaims the janitor. "How be I to know you curls his hair?"

"If you'll come outside I'll show you the scissors."

"Come outside! How be I to come outside?"

"You don't want a yellow ticket to come outside, do you?" says Toole, a surprised and very innocent look of wonder upon his face.

"Now, look here, mister, you must stand aside—Yellow tickets this way!"

"Can I stand *aside* without a yellow ticket?"

asks Toole, now looking at his watch with just a shade of anxiety on his face, the policeman more flustered than ever as he recognizes in a group of the very last comers a member of the county bench, with his haughty wife and buxom daughters.

"Yellow tickets this way. Thankee, sir; this way, my lady; thankee, my lady!"

"I can stand *aside* without a yellow ticket," says Toole, when the last exciting incident is at an end, "and you don't want a yellow ticket to come *outside*. And yet you want a yellow ticket to go *inside*. Really it is the most extraordinary thing! *It does make me so wild!*"

The simple-minded officer looking at his questioner in a puzzled manner, inclined for a moment to get angry, seeks relief in his war-cry of "Yellow tickets this way!" at the moment that a burst of applause comes swelling through the half-open doorway, and Toole is rescued by a tall, military-looking gentleman, in faultless evening dress, and wearing a moustache and imperial that are dark compared with his white hair. This is Mr. George Loveday, his agent and friend, whose merry eye takes in the situation at once, and appreciates the fun of it. Mr. Loveday at once provides his chief with a yellow ticket, confers a similar favour on myself, and I follow the famous comedian to his dressing-room, where he is glad to welcome an old friend. While he is making up for "Chawles" in his latest London success, *A Fool and His Money*, we compare notes about the little unrehearsed comedy just concluded outside the theatre. I tell him of my scheme for combining business with pleasure, and suggest that the Interview shall be of an anecdotal character, whereupon he is reminded of an incident in which the most persistent of practical jokers, Sothorn, was himself the victim.

V.

"SOTHERN occurs to me at the moment," says Toole, "because I have only this week been seeing him off to America, from Liverpool. Well, he had played me a rather easy trick. I didn't think my turn would come so soon as it did. This is what happened: A friend and myself had engaged to meet Sothern on a little matter of business at a chop-house in the city, one of those odd old places that always interest me, and which



MR. SOTHERN.

I wanted to show Sothern. I don't know anything more amusing than a prowl about the city; I lived in the city as a boy, and I expect I under-

stand the fun and humour of it more than most fellows on that account. Sothern was late. We were only going to have a chop or steak and a glass of wine, so we did not order anything, but thought we would wait until Sothern came. Both my friend and myself were attracted by a cantankerous-looking old gentleman in a dress-coat with a high collar, and a pair of tortoise-shell eyeglasses, who was not eating a chop, but devouring it, going at it as if it had done him an injury. It was not the thing at all, I know, but on the impulse of the moment, prompted by his odd appearance, I stepped up to him at a critical moment of his luncheon, slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and said, 'Hallo! George, my dear fellow, how are you?'

"The old gentleman leaped from his seat very indignantly, dropped his knife and fork, and asked what I meant, how I dared to salute him in that way. I apologized in the most graceful manner possible, said he reminded me of an old friend, hoped he would not think anything of it, quite a mistake, and in due time I overcame his evident desire to strangle me.

"We adjourned to another part of the room, and by-and-by Sothern came in. I nudged my friend, feeling that my opportunity of revenge had arrived. You know Sothern's intense love of fun, his great animal spirits, and his general anxiety for excitement.

" 'Odd-looking fellow,' I said to him, 'the old gentleman who has just commenced upon a second chop. I've a good mind to step over, slap him on the shoulder, call him George, and say it's years since I've seen him. He's such an odd-looking fish!'

" 'I'll do it,' said Sothern.

" 'No,' I replied, 'perhaps he would know you.'

“‘Not at all; he’d never know me,’ answers Sothern.

“‘What a strange-looking old chap he is! I don’t think you had better do it,’ I said.

“But nothing would restrain Sothern when once an idea had taken possession of him. Just as the old gentleman was conveying a dainty morsel to his capacious mouth, he was saluted by Sothern with a hearty smack on the back, and an exclamation of ‘Hallo, George! Why, it must be years since I’ve seen you.’

“The stranger could scarcely speak for passion. ‘How dare you, you ruffian!’ he exclaimed. Whereupon Sothern, in his pleasantest manner, began to make his excuses. ‘Don’t tell me, sir; you did it on purpose! I know it. I have had my chop here for twenty years, and such a thing never occurred before. Landlord, what is the meaning of it? I will not put up with it. This is the second time I have been assaulted and called ‘George’ in this very room within ten minutes!’

“It occurred to us that it would be well to take our luncheon in some other restaurant. As we left we were presently joined by Sothern, and I am bound to do him the justice to say that, although a little chagrined, he shook his head and cried ‘quits’ as calmly as could possibly be expected under the circumstances, and I hope that is the greatest liberty I ever took with a stranger in my life. I made an opportunity to find out that old gentleman on a subsequent occasion, and over a glass of a particular vintage of port wine, which he always favoured at the house in question, I made my peace with him, and laid the foundation of an agreeable acquaintanceship.”¹

¹ Mr. Frith, in his delightful “Autobiography and Reminis-

VI.

"CURTAIN'S up, please, Mr. Toole," says the call-boy, which gives the actor time enough to remark, "You won't go away, will you? I'll be back very soon—unless you'd like to go in front—yellow tickets this way!" Then, listening for the approach of his cue, he says, "We don't often play in Town Halls and Assembly Rooms, but when we do we always have first-rate audiences—a little inconvenient as to room, but try and make yourself comfortable; I don't smoke, as you know, but you will find a cigar on the mantelshelf, and my dresser will give you a soda and brandy."

He resumes his eyeglass, tries to find a cigar, makes a dive for the soda and brandy. I assure him I require neither one nor the other, and the next moment "Chawles" is in the presence of a

cences," pays an unconscious tribute to Sothern's humour by telling this story as Sothern had evidently told it to him. Of course Sothern made a version of his own, in which he reversed the positions of the two leading figures in the little comedy. Mr. Frith has a pleasant reference to Mr. Toole, with an illustrative anecdote, which I venture to quote:—"I hope that I shall not offend my friend when I announce that he is a practical joker; but his jokes are harmless—not like some others that I have named—and always amusing. It is told of him that he was seen, at the close of a railway journey, to be going through a performance with one of his gloves, which, on a close observation, appeared to be the stuffing it with cotton-wool, till it assumed the shape of a human hand. He then contrived to arrange it in front of his coat so that it should appear to be one of his own, and he placed his railway ticket between the fingers. The train stopped presently, and the usual cry, 'All tickets ready!' was heard. 'Tickets, please,' said the guard, opening the door of the carriage. 'Take mine,' said Toole. The guard took the ticket, and the hand as well. 'The guard was a robust person,' Toole is reported to have said, 'but he staggered back in a faint, calling feebly for smelling salts.'"

most enthusiastic audience. I glance at the house from the wings, find it crammed, the reserved seats filled with aristocratic and fashionably-dressed people. The county policeman has transferred his services from the outside to the inner portals of the temple of Thespis, and is evidently getting his face ready for expressing as much hilarity as the presence of certain members of the magisterial bench may deem reasonably decorous in an officer on duty. The comedy goes with roars of laughter, every point in it is taken, every humorous situation recognized. At the end of the act there is a unanimous call for the company, and no one is more off his guard in the demonstration of his satisfaction than the Johnnie in blue.

VII.

"I HAD a dreadful shock the other night," says Toole, returning by-and-by to his dressing-room. "It is, as you know, the property man's place to give me every night in 'Chawles' a photograph, which is supposed to be the portrait of my sweetheart; I get a different picture pretty well every time, and I hardly ever notice it much, though of course I pretend to. Well, the other night, just before I went on, I had read in an evening paper of the death of Mrs. Howard Paul,² which made

² Although Mrs. Howard Paul was best known to the general public as the leading attraction of a high-class variety entertainment arranged and managed by her husband, Mr. Howard Paul (a native of Philadelphia, United States), she was distinguished both upon the lyric and the dramatic stage. She was born at Dartford in Kent, and made her first success as "Captain Macheath," in *The Beggar's Opera*, at the Strand, on October 24th, 1853, and appeared in the same part at the Haymarket a year later, with great success. Soon afterwards she married Mr. Paul, and they appeared together in their well-known entertainment of *Patchwork*, following in

me feel sad, for you know what a good, clever creature she was, and in that portrait-scene shortly afterwards I found that the photograph pushed into my hand was poor Mrs. Paul's likeness. I expect I made a very serious face, did something I had never done before, and the house roared with laughter. They thought I meant it for fun ; I certainly did not ; for a few moments I never



MRS. HOWARD PAUL.

felt more miserable in my life. I had been rather dull just previously, for I had been staying at the hotel where my poor friends Charles Mathews, and Brown, of the Prince's, Manchester, had died, and I had had a little memorial of Phelps sent me

the wake of *Sophia and Annie*, and preceding the German Reed class of performance, since merged into the present more dramatic form of work which has for many years made "German Reed's" a London institution. In 1869 Mrs. Howard Paul returned to the stage, and played "Lady Macbeth" to Mr. Phelps' "Macbeth" at Drury Lane. Later

that very day, and altogether, don't you know, I was very hipped. But——"

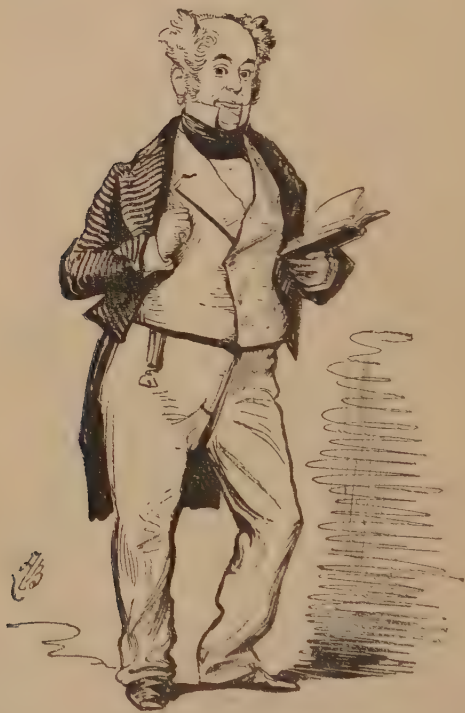
And again he disappeared; again there was a demonstration. I wonder, by the way, if the country policeman had "detected" him by this time? Presently there was a roar of laughter, and then another. I smoked in the little room, sitting on a packing-case, while the comedian's dresser was busy with his next change. The table in front of me was covered with "make-up" materials—the traditional rouge-pot and hare's foot, the lamp-black, the camel's-hair pencil; and upon a nail hung the jockey's suit for *The Steeplechase*. Mr. Toole has played this farce and *Ici on parle Français*, more times than any actor has probably ever played two pieces before. They have been in his programmes and constantly performed for nearly thirty years.

The judgment of actors in regard to parts that suit them, or in which they are likely to be successful, is not always reliable.

"When first I was offered the part in '*Ici*,'" Toole says, "I refused it. I was a member of the Adelphi company at the time. Webster read

she appeared as the dashing heroine of *The Grand Duchess*, rivalling in the part its original French creator. Soon afterwards she originated an entertainment of her own, travelling through the provinces with a miscellaneous company that included Arthur Matheson, Mr. Rutland Barrington, and occasionally Mr. George Grossmith, junior. She appeared with the two last-mentioned artists in the original cast of *The Sorcerer* at the Opera Comique, and afterwards went on tour with *The Crisis* company, playing Mrs. John Wood's original part. She was taken ill during this engagement, and only literally reached home in time to die. She was a singularly generous and highly-gifted woman. The *Athenæum* said of her that "she sacrificed for second-rate objects an amount of natural vocal endowment rarely combined (at least in this country) with such genius for the stage as she undoubtedly possessed, which might have made her the Malibran of England, and, as such, an artist of European renown."

the farce to me, but, great actor as he was, I don't think he read farces well. I said, in the first place, the part of an old man was not my line of business, and secondly I knew nothing about French, the latter excuse under the circumstances, I am willing to admit, being rather a poor one. I



MR. TOOLE AS "SPRIGGINS" IN "ICI ON PARLE FRANÇAIS."

suggested that Billington should play it; but he was cast for 'Victor Dubois,' and Webster said, 'You can't tell from reading how a farce will go. I daresay you will work it up into something—indeed I am sure you will.' He urged me so earnestly to play the part that I consented. It

went fairly well on the first night, and gradually grew into a great success. I added new business to it for ever so long, took advantage of accidental laughs and gags, and at last brought it to what it is. I could at the outset have purchased it for a few pounds, but I didn't, and up to the present time I have paid a fee for every performance of it, and I have acted it not hundreds but thousands of times."

Ici and *The Steeplechase* are in fact two of the most popular of the farces which Mr. Toole plays. "It does make me so wild!"—one of his many familiar gags—is adopted into the local vocabulary wherever he plays "Tittums." But sometimes another actor, playing the same part, will annex his contemporary's "business," as it is called. Mr. Toole had curious experiences of this when he visited America. His theatrical cousins had repeated his business and his gags with complimentary fidelity. To some of his audiences it seemed as if he were imitating their own popular favourites. This kind of thing is not, however, confined to America. It obtains in all countries. When the influence of a good actor spreads as an inspiration, and is accepted in the way of suggestion and method, such limited imitation is to be commended; but when the aim is merely to reproduce another's manner, and to repeat words and business which are the outcome of the original interpreter's careful study of a part, then surely the copyist lays himself open to serious condemnation.

VIII.

"TALKING about certain actors who crib another's business—and I don't think many do it," says Toole, when "Chawles" is over and *The Steeplechase* is being got ready, "I'll tell you an amusing

story. I've been rather successful, as you know, in inventing some catch sayings, such as, 'Still I am not happy,' 'It does make me so wild,' and so on. Well, when I first played *The Steeplechase* at Sheffield, the stage-carpenter hadn't placed the door and other things quite as I wanted them, and every time I wished them changed he said, 'Oh, sir, Jack So-and-So always had it this way.' I found to get all I wanted properly done I had to make myself very agreeable, as indeed I hope I always do. The carpenter, a blunt Yorkshire fellow, took quite a fancy to me, and was very obliging, even generous. When the scene was set for rehearsal, he took me aside, and said, 'Look here, Mester Toole, I'll just tell thee summat; you'll not foind it in th' book, but Jack So-and-So, whenever he come to th' top of stage, or put his head out of door, he'd keep saying, '*does mak' me so wild!*' Now, just you do that, Mester Toole, and see how it will go; just you try it.' As usual, when the night came, it did go, with roars of laughter. 'Now, then, didn't I tell thee so?' said the stage-carpenter, as I came off; and he is to this day under the delusion that he has had a great deal to do with my success in life."

IX.

"SLUMMING" is a modern fashion, but both Irving and Toole were always slummers. Nothing delights either of them more than making excursions into the back streets of old towns, wandering about in the haunts of the people. When they were less known, this was easier than it is now, and resulted in many odd and curious experiences. They are both great students of character, the one with a more grim appreciation of the weird side of human nature than the other; but both quick, not only to

discern oddities in men and manners, but equally rapid in their realizations of the quaint and curious aspects of human nature.

"I think an actor who loves his profession," Toole remarks, in a parting chat on that memorable "one night only," "sees more of the truly human side of life than any other man, except in the case of painters like Wilkie, or a novelist such as Dickens; because it is our business to go into the streets, into the slums, into markets and taverns, into society for our models. I hardly remember anything I do that is not the result of something I have seen, some oddity I have noted in real life, some eccentric trick of a person, some queer mode of dress or speech, something that one almost unconsciously seizes upon as characteristic of the fictitious part one has to play; and this study of real character has always been to me a great enjoyment, and always will be so; at times, when I have been below par, as they say, having a touch of the miseries, I have found it a perfect cure to sally forth character hunting. I daresay there are many people who think that a comedian, particularly a low comedian, is never unhappy; but, as a rule, I believe he is often in truth more miserable than the tragedian, who gets used to sorrowful parts, and therefore does not mind a bit of the reality; I believe I am an exception, in respect of animal spirits; I was always of a cheerful disposition, and I often feel quite as merry as the rollicking part I am playing can possibly require, and enjoy the fun of it as much as my audiences. But, as I was saying a little while since, there are, of course, many pathetic instances of actors being entertaining and funny on the stage, when in truth they are suffering the mental agony of grief and sorrow. Duty is duty in all businesses and professions. I

don't say that it is only upon the stage that men and women have to fulfil their engagements handicapped by some sudden or recent affliction ; but there is something nevertheless additionally pathetic, I always think, when an actor has to be funny on the stage while his heart is at home with some great sorrow.

"I remember, many years ago at Bradford, an incident that has always dwelt in my mind touching this phase of an actor's life. We were rehearsing *Paul Pry*. A young man came on for old 'Stanley.' He was nervous in his manner and shaky in his words. The manager was rather rough with him, which was perhaps right and proper for the discipline of the company ; perhaps this made me additionally considerate with the young fellow. I gave him all the encouragement I could, and at night he played fairly well ; he was a little slow, however, and not very effective. The next morning, at a rehearsal of *The Steeplechase*, in which he was cast for the waiter, I was sitting at the prompter's table, when I heard a voice at my elbow say in very subdued tones, 'I am afraid I was very nervous last night ; I hope you will look over it.'

"I looked up, and saw my friend of the previous morning's rehearsal. I noticed that he was now dressed in black, and that there was a crape band on his hat.

" 'Oh, yes,' I said, 'you did your best ; no man can do more.'

"He remained by the table in a curious, hesitating way, and then, almost in a whisper, and in a very apologetic way, said, 'The truth is, sir, my mother died the day before yesterday.'

" 'I'm very sorry,' I said.

" 'She was very fond of me,' he replied ; and the incident dwelt in my memory as a very touch-

ing and tender thing. I often thought of the poor fellow, and was glad years afterwards when the story had a pleasant ending.

"One afternoon, when I was going to the Adelphi, through Covent Garden, a well-dressed, cheery-looking man stopped me with the remark, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Toole, you don't remember me? I am the man who played "Stanley" so badly at Bradford.'

"I was quite glad to see the fellow. He



MR. TOOLE AND THE NERVOUS ACTOR.

seemed to lift from my mind what had always been a very sad memory.

"'Oh, yes,' I said, 'I quite remember. Glad you look more cheerful than you did then; hope you have prospered.'

"'Yes, thank you,' he said, 'but not in the profession. No, I have a little business in London now, sir. Doing well, sir; married too, and all right.'

"'Pleased to hear it,' I said.

"'I was not up to my best mark at Bradford

for reasons,' he said, his face shadowing over a little at the remark 'for reasons'—and there was, I thought, a bit of grim humour in his closing remark, 'but all the same the manager fined me two-and-six for not being perfect in my words.' "

X.

AND thus the chronicler came to the end of that pen-and-ink sketch, which was to be more anecdotal than biographical. Suggesting the idea of further chats in a similar direction, it may well stand as the beginning of a personal record, unconventional, I hope, in treatment as in matter.

In America they call an old story a "chestnut," and severe sticklers for novelty carry what they call a "chestnut bell," which they ring—tinkle, tinkle, tinkle—whenever in society or elsewhere any gentleman indulges in a twice-told tale. Out West the other day one of these worthies found himself almost for the first time in a church, though he had a fair acquaintance with the best of all books. In an oratorical application of his text, the preacher began to tell the story of Jonah and the whale, whereupon the new-comer rang his chestnut bell.³

³ Mr. Joseph Jefferson ("Rip Van Winkle") has recently explained the origin of the word "chestnut" as applied to an old story, attributing its authorship to Mr. William Warren, the well-known American comedian.

"There is a melodrama," says Mr. Jefferson, "but little known to the present generation, written by William Dillon, and called *The Broken Sword*. There are two characters in it—one a Captain Xavier, and the other the comedy part of Pablo. The Captain is a sort of Baron Munchausen, and in telling of his exploits says :—'I entered the woods of Colloway, when suddenly from the thick boughs of a cork-tree'—Pablo interrupts him with the words, 'A chestnut, Captain : a chestnut.' 'Bah!' replies the Captain ; 'Booby, I say a cork-tree !' 'A chestnut,' reiterates Pablo. 'I should know as well as you, having heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' William Warren, who had often played the part of Pablo, was

Should any reader of these opening chapters feel inclined to imitate the American bell-ringer, I will ask him to consider this explanation. There is an industrious friend of mine on this side of the Atlantic who, from time to time, has availed himself of several and sundry true stories which I have related in the course of certain journalistic work. He has given the narratives new dates, and, in some instances, new actors, and fresh conclusions; and I am bound to say I think he has spoiled my original stories, though I daresay he may imagine he has improved them. In several cases he has put into the mouth of Mr. Toole, language not at all characteristic of that gentleman; so that when the reader comes upon a story that would seem to call for the chestnut bell, I would entreat him to remember that the story which Mr. Toole or myself tells him is the original story, and that all others are spurious. It will be worth while writing these volumes if one only rescues from the slums of back-door journalism such anecdotes as have been distorted, vulgarized, and otherwise disguised by alien hands and unimaginative scribblers. I use these phrases in a Parliamentary sense, and would not for the world hurt the sensitive feelings of any gentleman connected, however remotely, with either English or American journalism; but when you see your own story flung about, here and there, in a battered and mutilated shape, gradually drifting into the gutter, with probably an improper innu-

at a stage-dinner a few years ago, when one of the gentlemen present told a story of doubtful age and originality. 'A chestnut,' murmured Mr. Warren, quoting from the play, 'I have heard you tell the tale these twenty-seven times.' The application of the lines pleased the rest of the table, and when the party broke up each helped to spread the story and Mr. Warren's commentary. And that," says Mr. Jefferson, "is what I really believe to be the origin of the word 'chestnut.'"

endo tacked upon its innocent tail, and its point applied to something altogether foreign to it, you may be excused for being vexed. At the same time, I would not have referred to the subject except in self-defence; but, in referring to it, I am tempted to observe, as Toole would remark, "It is a sort of thing one hates, and a man who will do it is a wretch; not that I wish to say so, for he may be a dear, good fellow in other ways." In this matter of self-restraint in the condemnation of others, Toole is a sturdy example of generosity. He is no sooner hurried into a bit of severe criticism of some person whose conduct, public or private, has offended him, than he straightway "takes it back"—to quote an Americanism—as I would these few remarks about the chestnut bell if the explanation did not strike me as due to myself, to my friend, and to the reader.

II.

AT ORME SQUARE.

Robson and the pleasures of a garden—George Loveday—"Man proposes"—A pleasant room and a cheerful host—Getting shaved—"An 'oss of another colour"—Memorable birthdays—\ remarkable evening—Legal luminaries and their extraordinary conduct—Too defiant—"That yere seven-and-six"—The cabmen's triumph—The Hon. Lewis Wingfield as "Mephistopheles"—Robson in Dublin—The story Toole told to Dickens—A happy home.

I.

"THERE is a handsome house facing Kensington Gardens, marked out from its neighbours by the touches of bright colour illuminating its balconies and conservatory. It is a house with a general air

of expansion and adaptation to modern requirements, which speaks airily of abundant internal comforts, yet with a vivacious sprightly exterior which says as plainly as house-front can, 'Cheerfulness and fun are as the air we breathe.' This house is the residence and property of Mr. J. L. Toole, the comedian, who, like a prudent, well-to-do citizen, has invested some of his well-earned thousands in the lease of his dwelling-place. . . . Turn down Orme Square from the Bayswater Road—it is easily found by its rather obsolete white eagle, supported on two columns united like the Siamese twins; an eagle which may have begun moulting about the period of the visit of the Allied Sovereigns, and has protracted the process ever since. That eagle, like St. Petersburg Place, Moscow Road, Bark Place, and similar names, speaks of fortunes made in the Russian trade early in the century, and invested in Bayswater house property. The drolly-melancholy bird suggests to Mr. Toole's visitors the retired coachman in *The School for Tigers*, who had 'druv a Rooshun ambassador and two Lord Mayors, and attunes the mind for appreciating the bright quips and pleasant cranks, the overflowing fun and humour, awaiting you when the front door is opened and you receive the cheeriest of welcomes from the heartiest of hosts."

The *World*, in its picturesque fashion, was thus introducing to its readers one of its "Celebrities at Home," at about the time when the chronicler of these reminiscences was sketching for other pages, at home and in America, that "Portrait in Words," which, having developed into a chapter of stories ten years ago, is now growing into a series of anecdotal conversations. Mr. Toole had removed to Orme Square from a not less cosy habitation situated on the brow

of Haverstock Hill, where he revelled in a back garden sufficiently large to grow flowers, and to have the suburban distinction of a summer-house and a grass-plot. I remember his telling me, in that very garden, that Robson frequently visited him there, on Sunday mornings, and that he had strongly advised his fellow-actor to take a house with a garden. "He was fidgety and restless," Toole had said, "sometimes on the stage, I fancied,



MR. F. ROBSON.

but always off, and I noticed that after we had sat in the summer-house for a time, with an occasional prowl on the grass, a sniff at a gilly-flower, or a bit of London Pride, he would settle down, like a man who is resting, grow quiet and reflective, and we would have a calm and enjoyable chat. I know nothing so soothing as a garden, nothing that calms the nerves so much as pottering about among flower-beds, especially when you have had a hand in their cultivation, if only to the extent of ordering the plants from the florists."

II.

IT is summer when I find myself in Orme Square, a bright June morning. I have walked along Oxford Street, past the Marble Arch. The roadway is crowded with traffic that has a holiday appearance compared with the vehicular bustle of the early months of the year. London is the pleasantest and the most wretched town in the world. On a dark, wet day, with the mud of countless wheels churned into paste, it might well become associated in the mind of the French traveller with suicide and murder. But on a sunny day in June, it is a gay, picturesque, soul-inspiring city. On this summer morning in question, Oxford Street merges into the Bayswater Road with a merry clatter of horses' hoofs and the whirl of every description of wheel. Omnibus, barouche, Victoria, family carriage, hansom cab, commercial van, and the daring bicycle, roll along in pleasant accord. No cabman tries to run down another when the sun is bright and the roads are in good condition. 'Bus drivers and cabbies vie with each other in the brightness of their button-holes. A troop of guards gives the traffic a telling touch of colour, and the music of a coaching horn is heard above the rush and rattle of the general traffic. The trees in the park are decorated with their earliest leaves. Children are trooping through the Marble Arch in company with well-dressed nurses, who pause to answer the smiling recognitions of her Majesty's household warriors. The fine houses fronting the park are decorated with flowers, and some of them have put forth their outer-blinds.

The little paradise of the successful actor in Orme Square is not the least inviting of the many

pleasant houses right and left of it. The windows are open, the flower-boxes are full of radiant colour, and the forecourt is white with hearthstone polish, and yellow with tulip-beds. It is the summer following the West Midland trip, and my host, for the twentieth time, has complimented me upon the pen-and-ink sketch that followed the "one night only." *Apropos* of this, we had already discussed the notion of a volume of reminiscences.

"If you were ever to write my life," he said, "that would be the way to do it."

"Yes?" I replied, more or less interrogatively, "but I should want the run of your papers, diaries, and letters." He had nothing in that way, he said, but George had "lots of newspaper cuttings and things." For years after this conversation, and literally at intervals of years, until the latter end of 1886, we talked of anecdotes and reminiscences until I at last bound myself to a strict but liberal taskmaster in the great trade of newspapers and books—Tillotson by name—to begin this work at a certain date; and then it was that George woke up to the necessity of looking over his papers. At Sheffield we made an appointment to meet in town, and "you shall have everything I have got with the greatest pleasure in the world." The few weeks between that time and our appointment to meet quickly slipped away, but I never saw George Loveday again; he died not suddenly, for he had been ailing during several months, but death at all times is unexpected, and his taking off was a great shock to Toole, and a great grief to others still nearer and dearer to him. "A good fellow, a faithful steward, and a true friend," Toole wrote to me in a notification of his death.

George Loveday¹ had for many years been Toole's right hand, managing his business affairs, travelling with him not only as agent but as friend, devoted to his interests, and to the last

¹ THE LATE GEORGE LOVEDAY.—TO THE EDITOR OF THE
"ERA."

SIR,—Our memories are shorter, perhaps, in matters theatrical than in most affairs. It is true we have a word of praise for the actor we don't very well remember, and for the play we saw as youngsters and didn't quite understand; but for what happens in our own time while we ourselves are busy and alert, well—'twas yesterday, dear heart! we had quite forgotten! I see that George Loveday was manager for Mr. Toole for some years, died much respected, and—that's all. Many can relate much more of the Loveday brothers (George and Henry) than I, and have known them longer; but in the Christmas bustle the matter may get put aside. May I remind your readers that before George Loveday was manager for Mr. Toole, or his brother Henry for Mr. Irving, they were managers on their own account, operatic *entrepreneur*, and fiddlers? It was the two brothers Loveday who years ago first introduced *Faust* in English to England. George managed the undertaking, Henry fiddled and beat time. Henry, however, can speak for himself still.

But what should concern us a little now is that George Loveday, just gone, was the pioneer of the present school of acting-management—the school which replaces the not-too-civil gentleman who was generally "somewhere about" the theatre, and when not toadying his manager or keeping an appointment at a neighbouring hotel, was exercising his sluggish brain as to whom it was politic to put on or to take off the free list. George Loveday was not of this kidney (some credit to him, considering the period at which he started), but was a quick, shrewd, courteous man of business; in the front of the theatre a genial host, in his office a busy brain. Handling a property so valuable as Mr. Toole, he brought to bear upon it a keen and original intelligence. With his precious burden he plunged into diminutive towns which had never dreamed of anything in the form of public entertainment beyond a reading by a half-audible vicar, or an hour with a peripatetic wizard. He almost smothered these places with "Toole is Coming," until, in self-defence, as it were, the inhabitants rose as one man, and—went to see what Toole did when he came. Out of one astonished town went Loveday into another, never waiting for a revulsion of provincial apathy or the exhaustion of

in affectionate relations with him. Prior to his engagement with Toole, he and his brother, Mr. H. J. Loveday, had been managers on their own account. They were among the first to introduce English opera to the public, both excellent musicians, and belonged to a well-known theatrical family. Their father acted with Edmund Kean, and their mother, who sat at the bedside of poor George when he died, had played with Mrs. Siddons. The old lady is over ninety, her faculties undimmed, and no mother could have had a more devoted son than the fine fellow whom she has had the affliction to see carried to his grave.

III.

Mr. Herman Merivale, collaborating with his wife in the authorship and production of *The Butler* and *The Don*, naturally saw a great deal of Mr. George Loveday, and the following lines

the bucolic purse. But he returned with his "Koh-i-nûr" again and again, converting what were—speaking theatrically—swamps into pastures; and we, many years afterwards, graze there now.

The work which this sort of game necessitated told upon him very severely. He was gouty by inheritance, and I have heard that he has often been transferred from the railway carriage to a bath-chair. He knew "Bradshaw" by heart. We all do now, but there was a time when "Bradshaw" was a synonym for mystery and madness—it was then George Loveday's alphabet. •

Poor fellow! His handsome head, his pleasant smile, his immaculate shirt-bosom, will be much missed. Years ago he was good-naturedly nicknamed "the Prince" because of his good looks. The reason might well have gone deeper. He was a prince of good fellows at home and abroad, always generous, courtly, and sincere.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

ARTHUR W. PINERO.

St. John's Wood Road, *Christmas Day*, 1887.

which appeared in the *Spectator* are worthy both of their author and his subject :—

GEORGE LOVEDAY.

[OBITUARY. 52, DECEMBER, 1887.]

THE sapless leaves fell in the drear December
In mourning on the dull, inverted clod ;
And the few faithful friends who must remember,
With head uncovered the sad surface trod.

Ay, surface ! light as the loose earth above him
Are the weak bonds that held the spirit in ;
So for all those who dead or living love him,
From out the grave springs a new sense of kin.

We knew him as he was,—so true and steady,
So tender, where the best might well be hard ;
At a friend's call so ever strong and ready,
That none might overcount our dear regard.

For him at least, we said, the sun of summer
Should lighten up the funeral's dark array ;
To him should Death come as a radiant comer,
When the bright world makes early holiday.

So spake our wisdom ; but a wiser said it
In words low whispered through the winter's chill,—
“ Awake the ears that hear, and yet can credit
The living message, quick for mortals still.

“ When the dull earth lies brown and shrivelled round you
And hope herself seems for the time half-dead,
And the warm summer that caressed and crowned you
Such short time syne, has vanished overhead,—

“ When the cold stars look palely on the clearing,
And the white moon but shivers all alone,
And the brief day, in long night disappearing,
Paints her grey canvas in a monotone,—

“ When old and new year part in sharp abruption
So yet things mortal and corrupt shall be,
Till this corruptible wear incorruption,
This mortal put on immortality.

“ No fitter hour for the disprisoned spirit
To burst its bondage and its freedom gain,
And from the Testament of old inherit
The great immunity from loss and pain.”

Something we felt of this ; and through the sorrow
 Something of comfort in the whisper found,
 And of the past a future seemed to borrow
 For him we laid, untimely, in the ground.

Dead—half-a-century old ! A mere derision
 To little bodies made of little clay,
 But what to Him, in whose majestic vision
 A thousand years are but as yesterday ?

Learn from our lost who can, one for another,
 The generous moral of the will to bless,
 And gather all that may, brother to brother,
 The lesson of his watchful kindliness.

Little we know ; but what we know is certain ;
 The revolution of December's wheel
 Behind the black but ever-rising curtain
 Doth but the promises of May reveal.

So mystic Death came in her disc of glory,
 The message of the snowdrift sent to bring :
 To us—the winter-memory of a story,
 To him—the priceless herald of the spring.

January 9th.

HERMAN MERIVALE.

But I am taking the reader far beyond the date of this chapter, and find it impossible not to do so, since I am writing it literally with the sound of funeral bells in my ears. Had not this work been announced and the date of its publication fixed, I should have been inclined to postpone it, under the depressing influence of the solemn cancelling of my appointment with George Love-day ; but time and tide, and printers and newspapers, must go on ; and we will therefore try and pull ourselves together, as we do in the playhouse for the comedy that follows the more serious scenes, and so get back to Orme Square on that sunny summer morning ten years ago.

IV.

THE windows were open. A thrush was singing in an adjacent tree. A sweet perfume of flowers came in with an occasional soft warm

breeze. There was an artistic litter of manuscripts, books, letters, and ornamental inkstands, paper-knives, blotting-pads, and photographs, on the writing-table of the host's study.

Toole entered in dressing-gown and slippers, and, never having smoked in his life, it was characteristic of him to be also wearing a smoking-cap. There was an indication of grey in his thick dark curly hair, but he looked years younger than his age, his eyes bright, and his face ruddy with health. His manner, as you know, is free and unconstrained, and he is one of those pleasant fellows who seem to carry about them an atmosphere of high spirits. It is a face of singular mobility, and full of that kind of power which commands success—a well-knit forehead, strong chin, grey eyes, a large mouth and a long upper lip. Toole would have succeeded in almost any line of work he might have undertaken, which above all things would require pluck, push, industry, sincerity of motive and an appreciation of the vagaries of public taste. But his instinct directed him rightly when it took him to the theatre, where, added to these qualities, he has great mimetic power and a supreme sense of humour.

"I don't often come down in my dressing-gown," he said, "but the truth is, Albery has been here reading a play to me and he came a little early. By the way, he was telling me rather a good story against himself. He's a wonderful chap to go about getting shaved, always seems to be going in somewhere to be shaved, has a mania for it. It was at Margate the other day, and the barber was a cockney and fond of the theatres. 'Jest come down from town?' he inquired. 'Yes,' said Albery. 'Seen this yere new piece of Halbery's?' 'Yes.' 'Well, he's

making a pretty fool of hisself !' 'Who ?' asked Albery. 'Why, this yere Halbery : he's a pretty dramatist, a hintroducing Cremorne on the stage, and making hout it's from the French. I calls it a swindle. It's a swindle if it is French ; and it's a swindle to say so if it ain't ; but everybody knows as Cremorne's Hinglish, and a nice hawful affair, too, to get a hintroducing of it to hour wives and families. I should like to kick that Halbery !' 'You'd better shave him,' said Albery ; 'it will pay you better.' And the Margate cockney does not know to this day whom he was criticizing and lathering so freely.

"It reminded me of a rebuff I once had. I was doing a double turn for a benefit at a little theatre, and arrived partly dressed for the 'Dodger'. The doorkeeper was a new man, didn't know me, and wouldn't let me in as Toole ; so I said, 'Well, I'm Toole's dresser.' 'Ah, that's a 'oss of another colour ; why didn't you say so afore ?' and in I went."

v.

"BUT talking of stories that rather tell against the narrator, I don't know anything much more amusing than the incidents of my last two birthdays. My son Frank, as you know, is studying for the bar. He said Lewis Wingfield had invited the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General for Ireland, who were both fond of theatres, to sup at his place in Maida Vale, and that he hoped I would join them. The night mentioned was my birthday, and I reminded Frank that as a rule I generally supped at home after the theatre on my birthday ; but he said Wingfield was anxious to do him a turn at the bar, the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General were both

old friends of his, and it would be a great thing to have the benefit of their influence.

“Wingfield afterwards called on me and said something to the same effect, and of course Frank’s interest was paramount with me, and I accepted.

“I had had two performances, one at the Crystal Palace and one at the Gaiety, and I was both tired and hungry when I got to Wingfield’s house—a lovely place he had in Maida Vale, with a fine studio, and all in the choicest æsthetic style. At the entrance to the studio there was a small room, very comfortable, but on this occasion rather dark—Wingfield’s artistic idea of tone and effect, of course. There was a nice fire. A coloured lamp or two were burning dimly, and there were lots of curtains.

“When I arrived, I found Frank already there. Wingfield introduced me at once to the Lord Chief Baron and the Attorney-General. The Baron was sitting in a low chair by the fire, and the Attorney-General, a fat gentleman, was talking to Frank, but in very guttural tones. He was rather a pompous person, as men with big ‘corporations’ often are, and he carried his Falstaffian weight as if he were proud of it. He was not, I thought, over-polite to me, but as Frank seemed to be getting on with him all right, I did not mind. He need not, however, I thought, have turned his back upon me after saying how do you do, as if how do you do had stuck in his throat and me with it; but the Lord Chief Baron seemed as if he noticed it and tried to make it up to me by being very polite, only the worst of the Baron was that he had an awful cough; one of those coughs which takes a man right in the middle of a remark and breaks him down—a gasping, choking cough which shook his frame and

made me feel very sorry for him. He was an odd-looking man, thin and spare, in a long coat which came to his feet, had thin spare hair, a bit of white whisker, and wore a velvet skull-cap; he was a learned-looking chap, and a pleasant fellow to talk to, no doubt, if it had not been for that awful cough.

“‘Yes, yes,’ he said, ‘your son’ (cough, cough), ‘is going to the’ (cough, cough), ‘bar; yes, yes, we must’ (cough, cough), ‘help him;’ and before I could thank him he went off into something nearly approaching convulsions. I suggested a lozenge from which I had myself found benefit.

“‘Is your lozenge’ (coughfffy, coughfffy, etchew ew), ‘any good for an influen—’ (coughfffy, coughfffy) ‘za cold.’

“‘Nothing’s any good for that but a good dinner,’ said Old Grumpy with the big ‘corporation’ and the bad manners. You know my weakness for studying oddities of character; well, for the first few minutes, tired and hungry as I was, I noted the peculiarities of Wingfield’s two distinguished guests. Old fellows on the bench have often marked peculiarities, but they were certainly, I thought, the rummest couple I had ever seen, though they bore themselves with a certain amount of dignity. Old Grumpy, as I christened him in my own mind, had quite the dictatorial style of a judge who might at any moment, don’t you know, commit you for contempt of court, or in a play, consign you to the deepest dungeon of the castle moat. He had an odd manner of turning his back upon one and swelling himself out. He was in evening dress, wore a frill to his shirt, had a rather high forehead, a slight matter of side whisker, and he spoke in a deep voice and with great deliberation—a sort of Sir Oracle. But I

soon got tired of studying the Attorney-General, especially as I said before that he did not seem inclined to be very polite to me,—evidently one of those swells who look down upon actors, I thought ; and then I began to wish I had not come and found myself saying to myself, ‘Oh Lord, what an evening is before me with these coughing, grumpy fellows ! Fancy having to sit between them at supper and get up conversations.’ The thought of it maddened me—of course it was very nice of Wingfield, to ask them in Frank’s interest, but I devoutly wished he had let me off. I had only been in this purgatorial room I suppose ten minutes, but it seemed an age.

“The Baron rose up from his seat presently, not without some difficulty, and tried to say something about having seen me act : ‘Enjoy the theatre’ (cough, cough) ‘very much, your “Paul Pry” capi—’ (etchew, cough, etchew) ‘tal !’

“I don’t disdain a compliment ; never knew an actor who did ; but I was so worried and depressed with this old gentleman’s cough and the other’s supercilious grunts, that I began to think of slipping out of the house somehow, I was so miserable.

“Suddenly Wingfield said something in a whisper to the Attorney-General, who said, ‘Yes, yes, capital,’ and began to laugh ‘ah, ah,’ not like the monks of old, but like a heavy villain who had got the hero of the drama in a hole. Presently the ‘ah, ah,’ grew a little more cheerful. Wingfield whispered a second time in the stout Attorney’s ear. ‘Capital ! The funniest thing I ever heard—ah, ah, ah—must tell the Baron.’

“As the Baron struggled to his feet, Wingfield drew my attention to something at the other end of the room, and all at once I received a whacking blow on the back. I turned

round to see a sight that really terrified me, for I thought that under the influence of despair and disappointment I had gone suddenly crazy. There was the fat Attorney-General and the slim Baron, hand-in-hand, curvetting round me like a brace of maniacs, and yelling in the most discordant tones, 'Whack-fol-de-row-dow-fol-lo-de-riddle-raddle-whack-fol-de-row-dow-fol-de-rol-de-ray.' And as they sung and danced they banged me familiarly on the back.

"In a whirl of wonder and amazement, I tried to retreat, and got as far as the stairway that led to the studio, when suddenly the curtains were withdrawn, and there I saw my old friends Lowne, George Loveday, and one or two others in a group, roaring with laughter, my dear boy Frank splitting his sides.

"I then turned towards the two old legal luminaries; they both confronted me, and in one voice calmly said, 'Johnny, dear fellow, we wish you many happy returns of the day!' And only then did I discover that my friend the Attorney-General was David James, and the Lord Chief Baron, Tom Thorne, who thereupon wished me many happy returns of the day, and thrust upon me a couple of beautiful remembrances of the time.

"I never was more completely sold. They acted splendidly. Even if I had had any suspicion, I could not have thought of James and Thorne as the impersonators of legal power, because they were at the time playing in *Our Boys*, and I had hurried up from the theatre, and yet they were at Wingfield's when I arrived, and looked as if they might have been there for a week. They would not, however, have been so successful, I think, if it had not been for Frank, who was one of the conspirators against me, and who knew, the dear fellow, that I should enjoy

the fun as much as any one of them, when once the thing was over. I need not say that Wingfield gave us a capital supper; but I was rash enough to say that I would bet anything they would not sell me on my next birthday, and everybody said they should think not indeed—once bitten twice shy.”

VI.

It will be interesting in this place to state that the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, well known in literary, artistic, and journalistic circles, is the third son of the late Lord Powerscourt. Declining the opportunities that belong to a younger son in the army and navy, the learned professions, and diplomacy, he ran away from College, went upon the stage, and made a tour of the Irish provinces with great success, the company including Mr. Addison, his clever daughters Fanny and Carlotta, Fred Robson, Fred Dewar, and the two Webbs. They played the legitimate drama and burlesque, Mr. Wingfield being very successful in eccentric comedy. In due time he came to London and played with Walter Montgomery at the Haymarket. He was the “Roderigo,” with Mrs. Kendal as “Desdemona,” Ira Aldridge playing the “Moor” to Montgomery’s “Iago.” Mr. Wingfield had acted a diversified round of characters, and was on the eve of signing a long engagement for Australia and America, when his mother intervened, and he settled down at Antwerp for three years as an art student. Henceforward his career was none the less exciting than it promised to be as an actor. He joined the Prussians in the Franco-Prussian war, half artist, half surgeon, and had many adventures; afterwards became war-correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph*, was offered the French Legion

of Honour for his services in the American Ambulance, and during the Commune was the accredited correspondent of the *Times*. Later he has written novels and plays. He decorated and mounted *Romeo and Juliet* for Miss Mary Anderson at the Lyceum. His last appearance on the stage was as "Orlando" in *As You Like It* at the Calvert benefit in Manchester, when Lady Theodore Martin took the part of "Rosalind;" Miss Kate Pattison, "Celia"; Mr. Tom Taylor, "Adam;" and Mr. Herman Merivale, "Touchstone." During the last few years he has travelled pretty well all over the world, having made long journeys in China and Japan—an eventful life and a merry one.

VII.

"WHEN my next birthday came round," continued my host, "I was not acting that night, and Arthur Stirling, Robert Wyndham, and one or two friends, had been dining with me. About twelve o'clock some of them were going home, and I was saying good-night to them in the hall, when a cabman came up to the door and said, 'Mr. Toole, I've called for that yere seven-and-six!'"

"'That yere seven-and-six, my man,' I replied, 'what yere seven-and-six?'"

"'For the hother night, when I druv you 'ome and you'd got no change, and said I was to come for it.'

"'Go along,' I said, 'you must not try that kind of thing on me; I never allowed a cabman to go away unpaid.'

"'Well I don't know about that,' the man replied, 'I wants my money, that's all I knows.'

"'You wants your money!' I said, 'and that's

all you knows ! If you are impertinent you'll have the police, that's what you'll have.'

"At this moment another cabman, very much muffled in the traditional cape, stepped from among a cluster of cabs that had assembled, I supposed, for the convenience of my guests, and without any invitation, joined in the conversation.

" 'Why don't you pay the man his money ?' he said ; and, to embarrass me all the more, my wife came into the hall and whispered in a loud voice, 'Yes, John, pay the man and let him go ; I daresay it is quite correct, and that you have forgotten it.'

" 'Forgotten it !' I exclaimed, I fear a little indignantly, 'I could not possibly have forgotten such a thing.'

" 'My mate remembers the sukumstance,' said the cabman, jerking his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the Jehu in the capes.

" 'Remembers it, vy of course I does !' said the other. 'You took the gent hup at the Garrick Club, you drives 'im and another gent, a taller than 'im, and he pulls you up in Albermarle Street, and the tall gent he walks round into Grafton Street, and then you 'as the order to drive to Orme Square—remembers, vy, I could be sworn on it at any police-court in London !'

"This rather bothered me for a moment, the mention of the clubs and the knowledge that I had occasionally dropped a distinguished tragedian at his chambers in Grafton Street. Seeing that I hesitated, my wife again suggested that I should pay the man. But that made me obstinate again. I could not bear my guests to have the faintest suspicion that I had actually been trying to bilk a cabman, and they were in the hall by this time, every one of them—several ladies among the number, my wife's friends, having come down from the dressing-room with their cloaks on, ready

to go home. 'Pay him, John, and let him go,' my wife whispered, and somehow the tone of her advice so strongly suggested I was in the wrong, that it quite upset me. 'I will not pay him and let him go! It is an attempt at imposition.'

"As I expressed this final determination, a hansom drove into the square and pulled up on the scene.

"'Vy here's Bill Mathers,' said the first cabman. 'He'll remember it, I know, 'cos I borrowed five bob of him on the strength of it.'

"Whereupon Bill Mathers dropped down from his hansom and said, 'Is it about the gent you druv from the Garrick—the seven-and-six affair?'

"'Yas,' said the first cabman, and 'That's the ticket,' remarked the brute in the capes.

"'It is an impertinent attempt at swindling, and I will not be imposed upon,' I said, when a new comer arrived on the scene.

"'What is it, Johnny?' asked the new comer, who was no other than Lewis Wingfield, 'Just passing by, couldn't believe my ears when I heard you talking about police and swindling, what is it?'

"But before I could explain the man in the capes thrust a parcel into my arms, and the hansom cabby pushed another upon the top of that, and they both said together, 'We wish you many happy returns of the day!'

"The man in the capes was David James, and the hansom cabby was Tom Thorne.² They had

² The names of Messrs. James and Thorne will always be associated with the phenomenal success of *Our Boys*, which was originally produced under their joint management at the Vaudeville Theatre. Mr. James played "Perkyn Middlewick" and Mr. Thorne was "Talbot Champneys," both very notable performances. *Our Boys* not only brought them fame and fortune, but it realized something over twenty thousand pounds for Mr. Duck, a provincial manager, who bought the country rights for five hundred pounds. Mr. David James made his

remembered a certain defiant remark on my previous birthday ; I had forgotten it ; but I keep with pride and pleasure the handsome gifts, a desk and a punch-bowl, which the two clever cabmen thrust into my arms at the height of my rage and bewilderment.



MESSRS. JAMES AND THORNE IN "OUR BOYS."

"It turned out that the first cabman was the genuine article ; they had coached him in his part,

first appearance on the stage at the Princess's Theatre during the management of Charles Kean. He achieved his first real success in a revival of *The Heir-at-Law* in 1865, sustaining the part of "Zekiel Homespun," his natural, unaffected manner

and very well he played it. David had been seated on the box of a four-wheeler by arrangement with the driver, and Thorne had for the first time in his life driven a hansom cab, which he did with a dash that would have deceived anybody—and his make-up was first-rate—coming round the corner at the right dramatic moment, while in the background, like Mephisto in the play, was their former confederate, Lewis Wingfield.”

VIII.

“We were speaking of Robson,” I said. “You knew him very well?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“And admired him as an actor?”

“Tremendously,” he replied, with much energy of manner. “I used to see a great deal of him in Dublin, long before he came to London. He was a popular comedian in Dublin when I received my first engagement there. He was at the Royal. I was at the other theatre. He was a special favourite in *Boots at the Swan*. Whatever the manager at one theatre put up, the other did, and I was playing *Boots at the Swan* at the same time as Robson. I got to know him very well. I used to go and have tea with him, and he was very kind to me, often gave me hints, and took

coming as a surprise to the critics, who had previously only seen him in burlesque. Mr. Thorne first attracted the attention of the public in 1862 in a comic play entitled *Tom's Life*, in which he impersonated a number of comic characters. He afterwards became a member of the stock company at the Strand, and latterly he has done notable work at his own theatre in a series of revivals of old comedies, his latest success being “Parson Adams” in Mr. Buchanan’s version of *Tom Jones*. His former colleague, Mr. James, at the same time has added strength to Mr. Wyndham’s company at the Criterion, and his “Alderman Ingot” in *David Garrick* has justified the promise he gave in the first serious part of his earliest days.

an interest in whatever I did. I was with him when he received an offer from old Farren to go to London. He had played at the Grecian before he went to Dublin, but never at the west end of London. Farren's offer was for the Olympic, and I went to the station with him and saw him off. He had a wonderful talent, and was a very remarkable actor. There were flashes in his mock-tragedy that were magnificent, overpowering. I sometimes thought he lacked repose; not that I would venture to criticize him even to that extent, he was so great a genius. I think if he had done a little gardening it would have done him good."

Then my host repeated the incident of Haverstock Hill, which is recorded early in this chapter, and drifted into other matters which I propose to hold back until the chief narrator in this collaboration is in a frame of mind to sit down and tell me the story of his life. Meanwhile it is pleasant to "hover," as "the Butler" would say, around our subject, and collect together the good things which need not wait for place or preferment.

IX.

"You told a capital story at the Theatrical Fund dinner last year," I suggested.

"About the Cratchit piece at the Adelphi?" he said interrogatively.

"Yes," I answered.

"It is a first-rate story; I told it to Dickens shortly after it occurred, and he was quite touched by it. What a fine-hearted, kindly, merry gentleman he was! He once told me he had at one time almost made up his mind to be an actor. I said it was a good thing for some of us and a splendid thing for literature that he changed his mind. He seemed to possess everything that goes to make success on the stage, in comedy, especially high-

class comedy ; and I never knew any one with such a keen eye for character, with such a quick appreciation of a joke."

While he was talking he was fishing among his papers for the Cratchit story.

"Ah, here it is in print, don't often get my stories into the dignity of print, except when George drops one into the ear of a critic or a friendly editor ; you can read it for yourself."

I was not going to be denied the pleasure of hearing him tell the story, and I returned him the reprint.

"A good story is never old, though print gives it a familiar kind of look," he said. "It was when I was playing 'Bob Cratchit' in *The Christmas Carol* at the Adelphi, under Mr. Webster's management, and every night at eight, for forty nights, I had to carve a goose and a plum-pudding. Mr. Webster provided a real goose and a real plum-pudding, which were served smoking hot for Mrs. Cratchit and the seven little Cratchetts, of course including Tiny Tim.

"The children always had enormous portions given them, and all ate heartily every night ; but what really troubled me was the conduct of the little girl who played 'Tiny Tim.' That child's appetite appalled me.

"I could not help noticing the extraordinary rapidity with which she consumed what I gave her, and she looked so wan and thin, and so pitiful, that her face used positively to haunt me.

"I used to say to myself before I began, 'Well, Tiny Tim shall have enough this time, at all events,' and I piled her plate more and more each evening, until, I remember, she had on one occasion nearly half the bird, besides potatoes and apple-sauce. It puzzled me to know how she could even carry it away to the fireplace, where

she sat on a low stool, in accordance with the story, much less eat it.

"To my amazement she carried it off and cleared her plate as quickly and as eagerly as ever, pushing forward for plum-pudding with the others. I grew alarmed, and spoke to Mrs. Alfred Mellon, who was playing 'Mrs. Cratchit,' respecting this strange phenomenon.

"'I don't like it,' I said; 'I can't conceive



"TINY TIM," WHO ATE THE GOOSE.

where a poor, delicate little thing like that puts the food. Besides, although I like the children to enjoy a treat'—and how they kept on enjoying it for forty nights was a mystery, for I got into such a condition that if I dined at a friend's house and goose was on the table, I regarded it as a personal affront—I said, referring to Tiny Tim, 'I don't like greediness; and it is additionally repulsive in a refined-looking, delicate little thing

like this ; besides it destroys the sentiment of the situation—and when I, as Bob, ought to feel most pathetic, I am always wondering where the goose and the pudding are, or whether anything serious in the way of a fit will happen to Tiny Tim before the audience, in consequence of her unnatural gorging.’

“Mrs. Mellon laughed at me at first, but eventually we decided to watch Tiny Tim together.

“We watched as well as we could, and the moment Tiny Tim was seated and began to eat, we observed a curious shuffling movement at the stage-fireplace, and everything that I had given her, goose and potatoes and apple-sauce, disappeared behind the sham stove, the child pretending to eat as hearty as ever from the empty plate.

“When the performance was over, Mrs. Mellon and myself asked the little girl what became of the food she did not eat, and, after a little hesitation, frightened lest she should get into trouble, which we assured her could not happen, she confessed that her little sister (I should mention that they were the children of one of the scene-shifters), waited on the other side of the stage fireplace for the supplies, and that the whole family enjoyed a hearty supper every night out of the plentiful portions to which I, as Bob, had assisted Tiny Tim.

“Dickens was very much interested in the incident. When I had finished, he smiled a little sadly, I thought, and then, shaking me by the hand, he said, ‘Ah, you ought to have given her the whole goose.’

“When I knew Dickens sufficiently well, having played one or two of his characters, it

occurred to me that perhaps he might write a special little piece for me. I called upon him to propose this ; felt a little delicacy about doing it ; suppose my diplomacy was rather transparent, for he at once anticipated what I had to propose, and said, ‘ No, I haven’t time to write plays ; my little books give me all the work I care to do, and are very profitable : but it will interest you to know that when I was writing “ Great Expectations,” with a view to the possibilities of a dramatic version of the story, I had you in my eye all the time for “ Joe Gargery ” and Ben Webster for the Convict.’ ”

X.

THE Orme Square house was full of interesting curios and pictures, more or less associated with Mr. Toole’s career, but I propose to describe these and other things of a later date in a sketch of his present home, not forgetting his dressing-room at the theatre in King William Street. In leaving Orme Square for the present, I feel that I cannot do better justice to its pleasant domestic atmosphere than by quoting the concluding passages of “ Celebrities at Home,” in which the family sentiment of the actor’s home is so delicately suggested, the reality of its domesticity so deftly recorded.

“ Without presuming to touch deeply upon private life, we may be permitted to say that the subject of this paper is essentially a domestic man, and so devoted a husband and father as to be generally accompanied by his family when his professional engagements necessitate more than a short absence from London. When Mr. Toole visited America, for example, Mrs. Toole and his

son and daughter, and the latter's governess, were added to the professional fellow-travellers it was necessary to take; and after we have shaken hands that afternoon, with a merry parting jest, the thought occurs, how widely different the experience has been from much that one has read of comedians off the boards. Hypochondriacal and gloomy creatures occasionally, whose fun and animal spirits left them with their stage-dress; or dissolute profligates, whose irregularities were a proverb, and whose homes were a disgrace, the remembrance of their careers brings into strong relief the cheerful brightness of the happy house we have left, which might be singled out as a typical example of a prosperous English middle-class home, in which the happiness of its master centres. The steady, intelligent young fellow working away creditably for his destined profession; the charming little girl who is as the apple of her father's eye, and who is the first auditor of many a playful stroke of humour which afterwards becomes famous; the abundant evidences of the thoughtful and affectionate care with which the comedian's tastes and wishes are studied; and above all his own happiness, enjoyment, and pride in and with his family, and his passionate yearning for home when he is away—all linger pleasantly in the memory when one recalls that merry afternoon with Toole, and the ceaseless outpour of amazing stories, illustrated by choicer comic acting than the stage has seen, wherewith it was enriched."

III.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

A Reception at Orme Square—Mr. and Mrs. Toole's Silver Wedding—Pleasant hours after midnight—Mr. Irving's first experience as a public reader on his own account—Toole at Dunfermline—"A 'Norrible Tale" in chapel—"Lo! the poor Indian!"—Complimentary groans—Toole's age—Michael Garner on the stage and off—Old Garente and the bandits—David James's Whitechapel romance—Hollingshead and the birthplace of Podgers—Low salaries and high art—Actors and their friends—Artistic society—The shadow.

I.

THE pleasant spirit of the closing picture of the previous chapter follows me in my last sunny memory of Orme Square. It was on April 27th, 1879, that Mr. and Mrs. Toole celebrated their silver wedding. Over a hundred friends accepted the invitation of the host and hostess to an evening reception. The guests were representative ladies and gentlemen, some of them already celebrated in the world of Literature and Art, others who have since achieved fame and prosperity. Each of them came with either a bouquet of flowers or a gift of silver plate, or both, and each might have wondered where the hostess would find room for another bouquet, or another less perishable souvenir; for quite early in the evening every sideboard, shelf, mantelpiece, table, seemed to be gay with flowers, or white with silver. Some of the tributes of love and esteem were accompanied with pleasant conceits in verse; others were signalized by serious and touching lines, such, for example, as the silver token from Mr. Clement Scott. When the rooms were crowded with guests, it was suggested that the poet should read his verses, where-

upon he recited the following stanzas with excellent effect :—

TO JOHN LAWRENCE TOOLE ON HIS "SILVER WEDDING."

A Silver Wedding ! Johnnie, is it true,
 For five-and-twenty years in chains you've sported ?
 Time, the Avenger, stays his pranks with you,
 And makes you younger than when first you courted.
 The best of fathers to the kindest son,
 On wife and daughter rays of sunshine shedding ;
 Paterfamilias and friend in one,
 This is the crown of Johnnie's Silver Wedding !

"A Silver Wedding for a heart of gold,"
 Hark to the echo of the voices round you !
 Brother and friend in one sweet nature rolled,
 We find you true—as we have ever found you.
 Take then, upon this day of perfect bliss,
 My humble gift—may you and yours outlive it ;
 Its greatest value to your friend is this—
 That he has lived to know you—and to give it.

II.

THIS recitation led to others, recitations to ballads, and ballads to Reminiscences ; but the Reminiscences came later in the evening, I might say earlier in the morning, for the hundred odd guests had dwindled down to a dozen, when men began to talk "shop" and compare notes about their varied experiences. You who know how evening receptions in artistic society usually end need not be told that the last two hours are invariably very pleasant, that, in fact, you have waited for them ; that they include, in the way of refreshment, the cigar you have been dying to smoke ; and that the little company will then consist, most likely, of a handful of the host's oldest friends and yours, as they did on this occasion. Among them I remember Mr. George Grossmith,¹ Bow Street reporter for

¹ "London buries this week an interesting and somewhat remarkable man in Mr. George Grossmith, the lecturer and

the *Times*, and lecturer to all the best of provincial institutes; his two sons, the eldest of whom was just scoring his first successes in Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's Operas, the youngest beginning to paint promising pictures; Mr. Henry Irving, who was in the first year of his management of the Lyceum Theatre; Mr. Arthur Cecil, who had been making a special advance in his art in the character



MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH, THE LECTURER.

of "Baron Stein," I think in *Diplomacy*; Mr. Lionel Brough (the survivor of a clever trio of brothers); Mr. John Hollingshead, author, journalist, and manager of the Gaiety Theatre; Mr. David James,

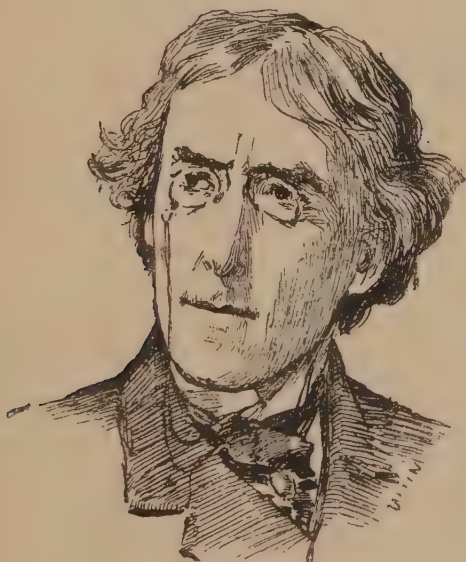
reader. Sixty years of age, the deceased gentleman began life as a reporter on the *Reading Mercury*. Through the friendly interest of Mr. Walter he was transferred to the *Times*, and became the Bow Street reporter of that journal. He never made a public appearance on a leading London platform, though he often lectured at suburban institutions; but in the country he held for many years, and up to the day of his death, the very foremost place as a lecturer and reader. He devoted himself

Mr. Thomas Thorne (*Our Boys*), Mr. John Billington, and several others.

One's memory begins to be dimmed in regard to matters of detail even after ten years ; but there are incidents of the night, scraps of stories and characteristic anecdotes, which it is not difficult to recall. Talking of the hopes, ambitions, and enterprises of his early life, prompted thereto by the conversation running in that direction, Irving mentioned his first attempt at "turning an honest penny as a public reader" at a little town near Edinburgh: It was during an engagement he was filling at the Theatre Royal. There was a holiday "or a night off." He and a friend, determined to utilize the time, hired the Town Hall of the little borough in question. When the night arrived they started off in high spirits. They saw their bills here and there announcing their attractive entertainment, but were a little taken aback, when they reached the hall, to find that it was not open. Presently, when the keeper came and lighted the

chiefly to the interpretation of Dickens, and in that line he did better than Dickens himself. His 'Lecture on Lecturers' was also very popular, and throughout provincial England he was admired and respected. An intimate associate of the late George Dawson, he had in London a large circle of acquaintances and friends. His modest little house on Haverstock Hill has echoed to the merriment of many a pleasant reception. George Grossmith had the privilege of living long enough to see his two sons distinguished and prosperous. His eldest boy is well-known as first among the clever troupe of actors who made *Pinafore* famous, and he has no superior as a drawing-room entertainer. His youngest son is Mr. Walter Weedon Grossmith, whose portrait of his father was hung in last year's Academy. Mr. Grossmith was presiding at the Saturday weekly dinner of the Savage Club when he was attacked with apoplexy, and died before he could be removed to his own house. Walter was with him. George was sent for, and came from the stage in *The Pirates of Penzance* to attend his father's dying moments. Mrs. Grossmith arrived too late."—London Correspondent *New York Times*, May 10th, 1880.

gas, and Irving's friend took his place in the money-taker's box, the Reader strolled carelessly on the other side of the street to watch the audience rush in; he strolled some time, the hour struck for the entertainment to commence, but not a soul had arrived; one person, I think, put in an appearance eventually and received his money back, and the enterprising impresario and his star returned to Edinburgh, saying very little by the way, and



MR. HENRY IRVING.

rarely afterwards mentioning the bitterness of their disappointment.

"The Town Hall wouldn't hold them now, Henry," remarked the host. "Hollingshead would take the risk, and try it for a week, wouldn't you, John?"

"Yes," said the judicious one ("Practical John" the Press had christened him), "and make it a certainty for the Reader, money down!"

III.

"IT reminds me," said Toole, "of a kind of failure I had at Dunfermline; not exactly a failure, but one of the most curious experiences as an entertainer—what they would call in the classics 'a rum go.' I remember telling Dickens all about it, not so much for the story itself, as an illustration that he had not exaggerated his report of the Committee of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Society.

"It was during my first engagement at Edinburgh. A gentleman called on me from Dunfermline, said he would like me to sing at a concert in that town on a certain day. He had seen me act and must have heard me sing my songs, 'A 'Norrible Tale,' and so on; and I concluded I had hit him, particularly when he said he could offer me a fee of five guineas, and make things generally pleasant for me. Salaries, as you know, were not tremendous in Edinburgh, and these little outside engagements were agreeable tit-bits between the acts, as it were. He was a nice sort of gentleman, very complimentary and evidently desirous that my engagement should be made as comfortable as possible.

" 'There will be no piano or band for accompanying you, Mr. Toole, and ye needna dress in costume; just come as ye are, and gie me the names o' the songs ye'd care to sing, so that I can put them in the programme.'

"He spoke with the slightest bit of dialect, the bit that makes the voice and language of a Scotchman so pleasant to the ears of a Southerner.

" 'If you're willing, I'll jest sign the engagement the noo,' he said.

"I was willing, he did sign, and I went.

“When I got there I found the concert was in a chapel, one of those hard conventicles which I always think must make worship rather a cold business, but of course that is a matter of taste. It was in the early evening; the candles in sconces on the walls just lighted, the formal pulpit rather shadowy, the hard pews containing a scattered audience of old men and women, who looked as if they had had a hard time of it in this wicked world, and who would take a deal of rousing into enthusiasm about anything except in the way of denouncing the depravity and sin of this mortal life. My spirits went down to zero. I looked at a programme that was handed to me, and found that the occasion was the annual soir  e of a Total Abstinence Union, and I afterwards learnt that the Union had been split up by dissensions, and that one-half was giving a rival soir  e in another part of the town, and that special efforts had been made in the rival entertainment to attract the public. Miss Rainforth was the star at the other place; I was only one of the stars at this. There was a kind of platform, something that would raise the performers a little above the audience. The pulpit was evidently not going to be used. I felt rather glad at that, because ‘A ’Norrible Tale’ in the pulpit would have been a little more out of place than ‘A ’Norrible Tale’ sung from one of the pews. I was awfully bothered, wondering what sort of an affair it would be, and my curiosity began to get a little the better of my fears of a *fiasco*. I noticed sitting beneath the pulpit a Red Indian, and by his side a something between the Mulberry man and a mob orator. Turning to the programme, I saw that they were ‘stars of the evening, beautiful stars,’ and my spirits went down again when I noticed that the meeting was to be ‘addressed,’ and all that sort

of thing. After a few words from a gentleman, who rose as the chairman of the meeting—whether it was a short prayer or what I could never make out—tea and cake and oranges were served in the pews, and to a few solemn younger people near the platform. The gentleman who had engaged me moved about on tiptoe; everybody seemed afraid of disturbing everybody else. At length the first speaker spoke again; this time on the benefits of total abstinence, and then introduced Brother So-and-So, the mob-orator gentleman who had been sitting under the pulpit.

“He wore no collar; his coat was closely buttoned about his throat; his hair was long, and a pair of shabby horn eye-glasses were dangling from a faded ribbon at his top button-hole. He told the most awful lies, I think, I ever heard. I remember in particular he dwelt upon a tragic narrative intended to show that in whatever shape a man approached whisky, or whatever he had to do with it, he was sure to come to grief and sorrow and death. A drunkard went into a cottage one day, where there was a keg of whisky on the shelf. He tried to get at it, and in doing so knocked down a gun which went off and killed him. Then he knew a mother who had been tempted to give a little child whisky for a cold, only a teaspoonful, but that first taste of the fiendish liquor was the seed which grew and grew, and led finally to perdition. The child eventually murdered its own mother.

“Think of any ridiculously ultra-tragic notion which might illustrate the horrors of drink, and nothing can be too tremendous for you to imagine in the mouth of the grim collarless orator who addressed that wonderful Dunfermline temperance society.

“Next came the North-American Indian, who, to my experienced eye, seemed to be nothing

more than a gentleman from Houndsditch, attired in the costume of the heroic savage. He spoke the English language with a very remarkable dialect, something, I suppose, between Choctaw and Bevis Marks. He was a wonderful Indian; had a tomahawk and the whole business.

"The audience took everything very seriously; made no demonstration of any kind; groaned now and then, but only in a very subdued way; and when the chairman rose and announced that Mr. Toole would now sing 'The Melancholy History of Villikins and his Dinah,' not a smile illumined a single face. They all took the announcement seriously, looking forward, no doubt, to some further examples of the perils and dangers and sin of whisky.

"I never felt more wretched in my life. I was very young at this kind of business, at any kind of business, for that matter, very young as a star. But I had always been accustomed to audiences that laughed in the right places. Dunfermline on this occasion took 'The Melancholy History of Villikins and his Dinah' with sighs and remarks of 'deere, deere!' They only regarded the story as another illustration of the horrors of whisky, and when 'Villikins' 'was a-walking in the garden all round, he see his dear Dinah lying dead on the ground, and a cup of cold pison all down by her side, and a *billet dux* stating 'twas of pison she died,' they heaved a sigh that I afterwards tried to imitate as an additional effect for the tragic ending, but I could never touch the depths of that sigh, though at the time I sighed too in sympathy; for I came to the conclusion that I had made an awful failure—the failure of my life. I was young and sensitive, you see, and modest; I sat down without a hand, nothing but groans and sighs.

"The Indian had another turn, and the chairman then announced that Mr. Toole would sing

'A 'Norrible Tale.' The very announcement was received with groans—groans of interest and approbation, not the groans Hollingshead is suggesting to Grossmith—I know you, John !

" Well, I sung the ' 'Norrible Tale,' and it was received with sympathetic thrills of horror. The fate of that unfortunate family was followed with intense interest, but without the faintest shadow of applause, without a smile, if I may exclude the internal mirth evident on the faces of the Indian and his oratorical pal ; the Indian, a most pronounced denizen of Whitechapel, was convulsed with laughter, if the working of his mouth and eyes and the almost apoplectic flush of suppressed force, or apoplexy, that came through his paint were any criterion of his feelings, and the orator turned his face to the wall. I think that my unmistakable confusion and disappointment probably amused them more than the song. Reflecting upon it the next day, I fancied I had detected a glimmer of humorous consciousness about the business in the face of the chairman. I cannot help thinking that he had by this time spotted the secretary's unwise zeal in his engagement of Mr. J. L. Toole ; I only know that all the impossible horrors of 'A 'Norrible Tale' with its ' fly on the ceiling whose case was the wust un, blowing itself up with spontaneous combustion,' seemed to go straight home to those sober temperance people ; and some of them absolutely wept at it. And when I come to recall the whole affair I don't wonder at it, seeing that they swallowed so easily the stories of my friend the mob orator. Mind you, there was no accompaniment, no piano, no music ; and when I sung ' Bob Simmons's Courtship,' with those whistling interludes that you will remember, the North-American Indian found it impossible not to laugh,

while once more the mob orator turned his head another way. I caught a twinkle of amusement in the chairman's eye, and two audible smiles on the countenances of two grey-headed, dear old conscientious abstainers. But it was altogether a most extraordinary, not to say a most painful, business.

"A man named Bishop, I remember, sang 'Bonnie Prince Charlie,' and sang it very well; and that was the only effort of the evening that was not serious, except my own.

"When the chairman paid me that five guineas, he put it down without a remark, but he looked daggers at the secretary, who, I have reason to believe, lost his engagement through his too high opinion of my vocal and sentimental qualifications for a small tea-party. I remember the scene as if it occurred yesterday, although it is over twenty years ago.² I wish I could find the programme,

² Looking over one of Mr. Toole's albums of autographs and curiosities, I came upon a copy of the *Dunfermline Monthly Advertiser* of January 13th, 1854, with the following advertisement set forth in double columns upon the front page:—

ANNUAL SOIRÉE.

The Directors of the Dunfermline Total Abstinence Society beg to announce that their Annual Soirée will be held in the Maygate Chapel on the evening of Old Handsel Monday, 16th inst. Doors open at half-past five, chair to be taken at six o'clock.

The meeting will be addressed by J. Critchley, Esq., superintendent of the Glasgow Total Abstinence Mission; Mr. George Easton, agent of the Scottish Temperance League; and in all probability by Owella Powell, a North-American Indian, who is expected to appear in Native Costume.

The music will be conducted by Mrs. Hartley and Mr. John Bishop, of Edinburgh, and

MR. J. L. TOOLE,

The Celebrated Comic Vocalist, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Tickets, 9d. each, to be had, &c.

Full particulars in programmes.

I believe I have it somewhere ; but, of course, I never saw any announcement or anything about it until I was on the spot.”³

IV.

A LITTLE jest at the expense of a guest having been referred to, Toole recalled, as an example of

³ It is desirable to state in this place that a great portion of these Reminiscences have, prior to the present form of publication, appeared simultaneously in many leading newspapers in England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia, India, and America. It is in this way that much of the current literature of these days first sees the light. In the present case the authors have revised the whole of the chapters and added to them very considerably, these two volumes containing at least a third more matter than the original articles in the newspapers. During the course of the serial publication the chronicler has received many kindly suggestions, and here and there the narrative has elicited comment and remark in the press, mostly of a very complimentary character. The Dunfermline incident has, however, called forth both comment and protest. The *Dunfermline Journal*, in quoting the above chapter, refers to it in a leader-note as follows :—

“MR. J. L. TOOLE’S FAILURE IN DUNFERMLINE.—MR. J. L. Toole’s first attempt at concert-singing in Dunfermline was a complete failure. He was announced as the star of the evening, and yet *Hamlet*, played as a comedy, would be nothing to the pitiable appearance he made. Mr. Toole came to tell Dunfermline teetotallers of the olden time all about ‘Villikins and Dinah,’ but, alas, it turned out that poor Dinah had had a preference for ‘twenty drops’ of laudanum rather than whisky. The twenty drops proved too much for Dinah, and they proved too much for J. L. T. If the great comedian had only had the ‘gumption’ to substitute ‘a cup of hot whisky’ for a ‘cup of cold poison,’ he would have been met by rounds of applause instead of sighs and no end of blank staring. Who knows but it is to his failure at Dunfermline that Mr. Toole owes his success in life. No man could build up a position in life upon such trash as ‘Villikins and Dinah,’ nor yet ‘A ’Norrible Tale,’ and it was perhaps the melancholy end of Dinah in Dunfermline that led Mr. Toole to see the necessity for diverting his talents into other channels. Wise

the treatment he had received at the hands of his friend Irving, an incident of one of his early starring engagements.

"I was playing in *Dearer than Life* with

men and women learn from failures, and is it too much to assume that the teetotallers of Dunfermline showed Mr. Toole that he could never attain to anything as a big-boot singer of 'Norrible tales ;' is it too much to presume that the abstainers of Dunfermline were the means of inducing Mr. Toole to leave 'Villikins' alone and go through the country and act those charming little stories of 'Jim' and the railway officials, which are adorned by morals that sink deep into the hearts of men and women? The story of Mr. Toole's failure in Dunfermline will be found in our issue to-day. Let the man and woman who can profit by failures read it ; let the man and woman who cannot build upon ruins, study the little story—

"Real glory

Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves ;

And without that the conqueror is naught

But the first slave."

'The *Evening Times*, of Glasgow, on the other hand, takes the incident seriously to heart, declares that the teetotal lecturer referred to was the late Mr. George Easton, "a manly and truthful Scotchman," in regard to whose warning a correspondent signing himself "St. Mungo" says :—"Does Mr. Toole not know that it is hardly possible to lie, in giving instances of the devastating power of drink? and is he not aware of the fact that a broad brush must be used in the early days of all reforms? Even in his own honourable profession the refined wit and delicate pencillings that will please the educated theatre-goer of the city would be entirely lost on a country audience, where strong melodrama or broad burlesque is required. The story of the mother who gave her child a teaspoonful of whisky, and so made it a drunkard, only proves that George Easton was a man before his time ; for Mr. Toole is surely not such a Rip Van Winkle as not to know that members of the medical faculty and distinguished scientists, after years of careful investigation, have come to the conclusion that this dread alcoholism is a hereditary disease, and that many a poor child is born into the world with a latent desire for stimulants, to arouse which it requires but a small supply of strong drink."

Irving and Billington at Leeds; after the play several gentlemen were in the general room of the hotel where we were staying, and among them a certain Mr. Jones, who professed to have a large acquaintance in the profession, and who appeared to have a local reputation as a judge of ages.

“ ‘Well, how old,’ said some one, ‘would you take Mr. Toole to be?’ ”

“ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘sixty-five, if he’s a day.’ ”

“ ‘Do you know him?’ I asked. ”

“ ‘Oh, yes; know him very well indeed.’ ”

“ ‘Ah! and how old should you take me to be?’ ”

“ ‘Well, I should take you to be forty if you’re a day.’ ”

“ Irving asked Mr. Jones if he didn’t think Mr. Toole was nearer seventy-five than sixty-five. ‘No,’ he said, ‘sixty-five if he’s a day;’ and the company present seemed to put it down that that would be my age. They had most of them been to the theatre and seen me, for the first time probably, playing an old man, and as it was my first visit to the town, and we were going on by the mail-train that night, I had a fancy not to go away and leave them under the impression that I was this very old gentleman. I found that Jones was a decent sort of fellow, and I said to Irving that before I went I should just give him my card, and let him know what a mistake he had made. By-and-by, when our cab arrived, we said good-night to our casual acquaintances, and taking Mr. Jones aside, I handed him my card, whereupon he said, ‘Oh, indeed!’ in a very offensive manner, turned upon his heel, and walked away. ”

“ ‘Well,’ I said to my friends, as we drove away, ‘that’s the most impertinent fellow I think I ever met.’ Whereupon Billington and Irving went into fits of laughter, and confessed that they

had warned Mr. Jones that I was continually passing myself off as Toole, and that he was to be quite prepared for my handing him a card and continuing the imposition with him."

V.

THE host then suggested that he had once heard David James tell a capital story, a bit of



MR. DAVID JAMES TELLS THE STORY OF OLD GARENTE.

Whitechapel romance, which he was sure no one else in the room had heard, about one Garente, a famous pantomimist, and Harry Carles, a clown. James was pressed to add the story to the evening's collection, and after some excuses that it

was too long, and he was sure he had told it before, he gave us the story, which with his permission I now repeat.

"Old Garente," as they called him, was a famous East-end pantomimist, and a friend of Harry Carles, the well-known English clown, who had settled in Italy.

"Garente had taken several English pantomimists as attractions on his Continental tours. Among them was a certain East Ender, who on his return related to his admiring friends many strange and curious adventures. He had the gift of imagination, and his hearers mostly had every desire to assist him in making his points. In a Whitechapel smoke-room, favoured by a select and regular company, he had a chair of his own, and was always willing to narrate his Continental experiences, and his friends were never tired of listening to them. There was one story in particular which they more especially enjoyed. They always drew him promptly for this for the benefit of any new friend, and however often he related it they never called it old, and the prologue of the draw was often in itself amusing enough.

"One of the company would remark · 'You know Italy, mate?'

" 'Rather!' he would answer.

" 'Wonderful country?'

" 'I should think it was!'

" 'You were there with old Garente?'

" 'I was, mate; ' and so on, until at last some other drawer would ask, 'Did you ever cross the Alps?'

" 'Did I ever what?'

" 'Cross the Alps?'

" 'Why, it was a-crossing the Arlps as me and Garente had the 'ottest adventure of all as occurred to us.'

“ ‘Tell us about it,’ the questioner would say in a spirit of inquiry, as if he had not heard the story a hundred times. Then the pantomimist would remove his pipe from his lips and relate his affair with the bandits.

“ ‘We had had good business,’ he would say, ‘very good business, and old Garente stuck to the bag—oh, he was the dooce to stick to the bag, old Garente! He always carried his money in a bag, and never parted with it—a closish chap, like all them furriners, never wasted a coin on extra drinks, nor nothing in the way of good fellowship! Well, we was a-going along all right, a-crossing the Arlps, when all of a sudden we thought we hears military music. We stops and listens, and old Garente, he becomes most uncomfortable, a-listening with all his might. We all listens likewise, and we hears far off in the distance the sound of a band, playing a regular bandit’s march, the sort of music as you’ve all heard no doubt at old Drury in *Timour the Tartar*, a regular bandit’s march—*Taratar, taratartaratarathrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar, tarata! Sshsh—sshsh. Thrum!*’ (imitating the well-known march from *Timour*, cymbals, drums, and the rest). ‘We was not listenin’ more than ten minutes when they comes round a bend of the Arlps, a reg’lar army, all a-glittering on prancing ’osses, with flags and banners a-waving, and in front a band of at least fifty performers, with silver trumpets, and cymbals and side-drums, and the entire rig out. It was a grand sight, in them spotless mountains, the ’osses a-prancin’, and all of ’em with saddlecloths embroidered with gold and silver, and the army a-comin’ on behind the band, with sabres a-flashin’ in the sun, and marchin’ orderly as if they was Hinglish ’Orse Guards, but, of course, differently dressed—

turbans and simytars, and gold lace, and jewels on the bridles of the 'osses; and, well there, such a turn-out as would have been a honour to any country, and to tell you the truth, *Timour the Tartar* weren't in it with 'em, grand as *Timour* were when I see it in its glory. And the band comes blazing on, in all its splendour—*Taratar, taratartaratarata, thrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar—taratar taratar! Sshsh, sshsh. Thrum!* Old Garente says, "Hide, boys, hide," says he. He knowed what they was, and what we'd got to expect. Well, we hides like a shot, we vamooches behind a rock; but the heagle eyes of them bandits, they was on us, make no mistake, they'd been on us no doubt all the time; and they dooced soon 'auls us out. "Halt! halt!" says the chief, first in Italian, and then in Hinglish. "Right about," he says. "Forward for the bandit's cave!" And they turns, and off we was marched, the band a-playin' as before, and old Garente a-trying to hide the bag under his cloak, but it weren't no go; besides, what was the good of the bag when our lives weren't worth a hour's purchase? Well, at larst we come to the bandit's cave.'

"Here one of the listeners would ask what sort of a cave it was; the narrator expected questions, and was always prepared for them.

"'Oh, the regler thing,' he would say, 'the regular bandit's cave—blood and bones and all that sort of thing about—Turkey carpets, silver shields, drinking-cups, and gold tables—the regler thing! We was in a pretty funk, I can tell you, when all of a sudden Garente's brother, who'd been a-hyeing the bandit-chief a long time—and I'd begun to notice it—all of a sudden he looks the chief in the eye, turns a flip-flap, and shouts, "Oh! here we are! Why, it's Harry

Carles!" And blest if it worn't! It was Harry Carles, the clown as had guv' up the show business and settled down into a bandit-chief; and here he was with all his army, on the march! Well, I needn't say as they not only spared our lives, but they was awful good to old Garente as an old pal of the chief's; they let him keep his bag; and what is more, a lot of 'em dismounts and they puts us on their 'osses, and marches off—*Taratar, taratar taratar, thrum, thrum. Thrum! Taratar, taratar, taratar—taratar taratar! Sshsh, sshsh. Thrum!* right to the bandit's palace, where they entertained us. Well, I fails for language to tell you how they entertained us. Every kind of luxury, champagne—well, we could have swum in it if we'd wanted—dancing-girls with coins a-hung round their necks, and Turkish trousers above their ankles, and Lord! such eyes they had! And it was more like a dream than anything earthly; and as for the palace in a general way, the palace of *Timour the Tartar* was a fool to it!"⁴

VI.

MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD⁵ related some of his experiences as a dramatic author, and Toole gave

⁴ Several correspondents have asked me for the music of the few bars of the march which Mr. James hums when he tells this story. I append it scored for the piano by Mr. Toole's *chef d'orchestre*. (see next page) Mr. James makes a great point of imitating the trumpets, cymbals, and drums.

⁵ Mr. John Hollingshead is best known to the present generation as the first lessee and for many years manager of the Gaiety Theatre; but his training was journalistic, and he has within recent years published several volumes of selections from his contributions to the magazine literature of his time. He was for ten years the dramatic critic of the *Daily News* and during its most popular days was a member of the regular

M.M. $\text{♩} = 144.$

f *Tempo di marcia.*

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of five systems of grand staves. The tempo is marked 'M.M. ♩ = 144.' and the dynamics include a forte 'f' and 'Tempo di marcia.' The notation features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, as well as chords and rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth system.

us an account of Hollingshead "getting me to play his first piece through sheer persistence."

"I think it was our friend Edmund Yates who first introduced me to John, and the introduction was for the purpose of my reading, or having read to me, *The Birthplace of Podgers*. No budding author ever followed up a popular young comedian with such energy and patience as Hollingshead. He had written *The Birthplace of Podgers* for me, and meant me to play it; and in the end I did play it; I should never have had any rest if I hadn't. A wonderfully pushing fellow, friend John, and it only shows that it is sometimes a good thing for both actor and author when the latter is pushed by the former. *The Birthplace of Podgers* turned out to be all the author thought it, a capital piece, very amusing and, what is more, it hit the public."

staff of *Household Words*. He wrote afterwards for *All the Year Round*, *Good Words*, and the *Cornhill Magazine*. Mr. Hollingshead was succeeded on the *Daily News* by Mr. Moy Thomas, who tells a characteristic story of the christening of one of Hollingshead's boys at Marylebone church. Toole and Thomas were the godfathers, and on being asked what his profession was, Toole seems to have puzzled the sexton. "Comedian!" he exclaimed, when he was entering the names in the parish register, "never had nobody here of such a profession as that! How do you spell it?" It was, no doubt Mr. Moy Thomas who in a kindly preliminary notice of the announcement of these Reminiscences in the *Daily News* said:—"Years ago it was rumoured that Mr. Toole was preparing a book of 'Anecdotes and Wise Sayings' of his friend and colleague the late Mr. Robert Romer, second comedian in his time at the Adelphi—an actor who, if he had not much wit himself, was at least the cause of wit in other men. That, however, was the fable of a sly joker. There must, nevertheless, be anecdotes of Mr. Romer in Mr. Hatton's book, or it will not convey to future times an adequate notion of Mr. Toole's unrivalled story-telling faculty."

Lionel Brough⁶ told us some of his experiences in the way of early struggles, and the miseries of provincial lodgings; and Irving was just as frank then as he is to-day about the difficulties of cultivating art on thirty shillings a week, especially when an actor had to find his own wardrobe for character parts, and his own hose and such like trifles, when costume pieces were not dressed by the management.

Other stories followed, illustrative of the actor's life in the days of stock companies, and of the probation considered necessary for a claim to act in leading rôles. Salaries hardly enough to keep body and soul together were mentioned without malice. The only approach even to hostile criticism in this direction, was the remark of one gentleman, who said, "and on thirty shillings a week they expected me not to get into debt, and made it a grievance when they heard I had a tailor's bill!" Each experience of provincial pro-

⁶ "Lionel Brough, comedian, was born at Pontypool, Monmouthshire, March 10th, 1836, being the fourth son of Mr. Barnabas Brough, and a younger brother of the well-known comic authors, 'The Brothers Brough.' He was educated in the Grammar School, Manchester, and under Mr. W. Williams, of the Priory School, London. His first employment was in the humble capacity of office-boy to Mr. J. Timbs, in the *Illustrated London News* office, in Douglas Jerrold's time. Subsequently he published the first number of the *Daily Telegraph*, and for five years he was connected with the *Morning Star*. Going to Liverpool with other members of the Savage Club to give amateur theatrical performances in aid of the Lancashire Relief Fund, he achieved so decided a histrionic success that he was offered a regular engagement by Mr. A. Henderson, and accordingly made his first professional appearance at the Prince of Wales's Theatre at Liverpool in 1864. Since that date he has played the principal low-comedy characters in London and all through the provinces. He represented 'Tony Lumpkin,' in *She Stoops to Conquer*, for upwards of 200 nights. Mr. Brough was manager of Covent Garden Theatre for Mr. Dion Boucicault during the season in which *Babil and Bijou* was produced."—"Men of the Time."

bation was an unconscious tribute to the narrator's sincere prosecution of his art; it was a story of hardships courageously endured for the love of it, of disappointment patiently borne with the forlorn hope of ultimate success.

There are very serious, sober-minded people who are inclined to think that social gatherings of the profession are orgies. Of course there can be no greater mistake. Actors are easily entertained and they easily entertain each other. Comparing notes upon plays and the treatment of certain characters, exchanging experiences and so on, are to them engrossing topics; and on the night in question I remember that though the company had heard Irving on more than one occasion recite Calverly's humorous narratory poem of "Geminii et Virgo," they insisted upon his repeating it, which he did, sitting by the fire, a cigar in his hand and a contented smile on his face; and the two Grossmiths, George and Weedon, gave us a reminiscence of Arab life as they had seen it in the neighbourhood of Camden Town; Weedon afterwards essaying an imitation of Mr. Hare in *Caste*, which was a model of artistic mimicry, being a reproduction or impersonation of Mr. Hare at his best. It was a pleasant day and a merry night. Alas! that one should have to speak of it as the promise of a happy year blighted at its close with a most bitter grief.

VII.

"REFER to my dear boy's death," the bereaved father writes me, "in a few lines, say that in the saddest affliction of my life I was supported by a good wife and an affectionate daughter."

Frank Lawrence Toole had inherited all the generous instincts of his father, was singularly

amiable, had passed his examinations for the bar, and would have been "called" in due course. A football accident at Eton, however, long forgotten, had engendered aneurism of the femoral artery, which developed seriously towards the end of the year 1879, and terminated fatally on the 4th of December. The bereaved parents received touching letters and telegrams of condolence from all parts of the world. The Prince of Wales having been a constant inquirer after the boy's condition during the later days of his illness, wrote his father in sympathetic terms at the close, showing a most delicate friendly feeling for the actor in whom he had so long taken a kindly personal interest. Frank Lawrence Toole, who died at the age of 23, lives in the hearts of many friends who knew and admired him for those fine qualities which are none the less masculine when they are accompanied, as in his case, with an unaffected simplicity of taste and manner, and a fervent love of home. He was a young man of varied accomplishments, musical and otherwise; but above all this he was a lovable youth, an affectionate son, and had all the qualities which go to make a good and useful citizen. I find it difficult to leave the subject, mournful as it is, without a more ample and worthy tribute to his memory; but the shadow which fell so heavily upon the life of my collaborator in these Reminiscences will have been made sufficiently apparent to the general reader; and the notes with which I am dealing belong to a public career, and may not be expunged under the influences of a private sorrow.

IV.

AFTER AN INTERVAL OF NEARLY
TEN YEARS.

A sorrowful vacation—The Reminiscences resumed—Notes from Aix-les-Bains—At home in William Street—Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, and the “Dodger”—A postprandial reminiscence of Edinburgh—Stanley, the Scotch actor, poet, and preacher—Rags and plush—“Twig”—Ideas for public entertainments—Toole at home—Irving in the fire-light—Books and albums—A Marlborough House *menu*—The comic appeal of a famous light comedian—“Buzfuz” and Mr. Serjeant Ballantyne—Beginning this present work in downright earnest.

I.

UNDER the shadow of his great sorrow, Mr. Toole for several months disappeared from public life. Seriously ill when his son died, he sought health and change of scene abroad. His medical adviser eventually insisted upon a return to work as the only remedy for both mind and body. He removed from Orme Square to Albert Gate, and went back to work at his pretty theatre in King William Street, where he met with a cordial welcome at the hands of his old friends, the public.

During “these changing scenes of life” I had made several trips across the Atlantic. The idea of the Reminiscences was laid aside, as it seemed to me, for good. It is the unexpected that happens. Nothing could have been further from my thoughts than a collaboration with Mr. Henry Irving in the narration of that illustrious actor’s first experiences of America ; yet, long before the Reminiscences of Toole were again spoken of, I had travelled with Irving through the United States, and written his “Impressions of America.” Three years ago, one quiet night at the Garrick,

the subject of these Toole papers cropped up afresh, and in August, 1886, I visited the comedian at home and began this present chapter. Toole had suffered a serious attack of gout during the year, and had been sent to Aix-les-Bains. As one of his friendly callers I had seen him during his illness. His patience under physical agony is not remarkable when one considers the solid generosity of his character, his sensitiveness about giving others pain or trouble, his equable temper, his habit of taking life as it comes. He wrote several letters to me from Aix-les-Bains. They were decorated with the suggested figure of a bather who was being conveyed in a sack from the bath to his hotel. The sack was upright on a handbarrow, in charge of two bearers. "This is how they carry me," he writes, "like Guy Fawkes; I was a little better yesterday and felt I must do something, so I put my head out at the top and made a face at one of the carriers and a small audience, but they none of them laughed; I suppose they pitied me, I must have looked like a lunatic; I felt like one, and therefore subsided once more into Guy Fawkes." Later, I had letters from Geneva. "It is very beautiful—the lake," he wrote, "but as I sit looking at it, and the sun is setting in the west, as the poets say, I would give something to see the Strand and have a chat at the club in my own language." He returned from Aix a new man, and his delight at getting back again among his friends was something very pleasant to contemplate.

"It could be said of Toole, if anything happened to take him from us, as was said of Garrick, that his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations," was a journalistic comment of the day when it was reported that his illness was serious; and the affectionate welcome he met with at his favourite

club, the Garrick, touched him deeply, as did the warmth of the receptions that greeted him on the professional tour which followed.

II.

WILLIAM Street, Albert Gate, is close upon the direct line of Western traffic, and Number Seventeen commands a full view of it. In the season, the splendid highway from Piccadilly is thronged with life. Even in this unfashionable month of August, with the fallen leaves beginning to chase each other in the wind, Albert Gate is busy, and a constant procession of wheels passes along the road towards Hammersmith.

The hall of Number Seventeen opens upon a fine staircase, and into a suite of rooms which belong to this narrative of gossip, chat, excursions and reminiscences. They are the rooms in which Mr. Toole receives his friends.

Before we enter, with our host, let us glance at the souvenirs which decorate the hall. A bust of Shakspeare, and one of Macready ("given to me by Lowne, who was a friend of the great tragedian," says Toole), a few engravings, and a large model of the Maypole Inn, immortalized by the story of "Barnaby Rudge," are the most noticeable things. The Maypole is a clever realization of the picturesque inn, with models of the leading characters of the novel grouped in front of it, the whole under a glass case.

"It was a feature of the dining-room of the Hen and Chickens, at Birmingham," says my host. "Dickens saw it there and greatly admired it. I tried to buy it, but the proprietor would not sell it at any price. He came to a kind of agreement with me, however, that if ever he parted with it I should have it. When he retired from the Hen and Chickens he sent it to me. Unfortunately,

Dickens was dead when the model came, and my chief purpose in desiring to buy it was frustrated ; I wanted to give it to the author of ' Barnaby Rudge.' I am not a great reader—never have much time to read books except those belonging to the parts I play ; but I have experienced intense enjoyment over the wonderful stories of Dickens. What always delights me with his work are his perfect studies of character ; to me this side of his art is the most fascinating. To have known from his own lips that he approved of my efforts to realize some of his creations on the stage, has always given me the greatest gratification."

III.

WHILE we are talking we have passed into the anteroom of the library, where a pleasant fire is burning, and the host's arm-chair, with a reading-lamp placed conveniently above it, is drawn cosily within the warmth of the hearthstone. We stroll through the room, into the library, and thence into the dining-room, and back again. The walls are full of pictures, the dining-room devoted to paintings, the other rooms to engravings, water-colours, and photographs, all more or less interesting, not only as works of art, but from their pleasant associations. There are landscapes by Sam Bough, the well-known Scotch artist ; portraits of James Wallack, Robson, Wright, Webster, Widdicombe, Buckstone, Liston, Harley, Compton, Thackeray ; busts of Irving, Shakspeare, Dickens, and the Prince of Wales ; engravings from familiar works by Landseer, Gerome, Frith, and Turner ; character portraits of Edmund Kean, Bannister, Miss O'Neill as " Juliet," a *Vanity Fair* caricature of the host as " Guffin," and a pretty, fanciful incident in the life of " the Bard of Avon."

"The dainty bit of landscape you are looking at," remarks my host, as we pause opposite a water-colour that recalls Corot, "is by Jefferson ('Rip Van Winkle'), who painted it for me; it is a sketch on the Thames; if he had followed the art of painting instead of acting, they say he would have made just as great a mark as he has done on the stage. I am very proud of that *souvenir* of 'Rip'; it always suggests to me the dreaminess of Sleepy Hollow. The pictures close by are two water-colours by F. W. Topham, presented to me, and the next one is by Edward Duncan, old friends now dead. Here is a drawing by Wainwright which belonged to Charles Mathews; Wainwright was a murderer, not the Whitechapel criminal, his namesake, and not even blood relations unless murderers can be called blood relations. The Mathews *souvenir* was the work of this fiend in human shape who insured people's lives and then poisoned them. He was a critic, I believe. My experience of critics has been of the pleasantest, and the worst I have ever before heard of a critic is that he has poisoned the public mind against an actor—generally a crushed tragedian—or stabbed an artistic reputation. I never heard of any other crime laid at the door of a critic except in the case of Wainwright. Perhaps that is why Mathews treasured this picture."

"But Wainwright was also an author, I believe, and a friend of Bulwer and Charles Lamb. We must look him up."¹

¹ The *Daily Telegraph* in an editorial article on the career of Cooper, the forger, vignettes in a few graphic sentences the character and career of Wainwright; we need go no further for an explanation of the interest which Mathews took in the drawing by Wainwright which Mr. Toole bought among other *souvenirs* at the sale of the famous comedian's effects. Students

"This is a statuette of Bouffe, the famous French actor, presented by the actor himself to Mathews. The little figure of Esmeralda belonged to Dickens, and the wine-coolers on the sideboard were among the interesting relics I bought at the Gad's Hill sale."

I feel that the owner's brief descriptions of these treasures are sufficient without any further indication of them, the more so that they suggest incidents and recollections of the past which give them at the moment their greatest value to both recorder and reader.

"Here is a picture of myself as the 'Dodger'—painted by whom do you think? Keeley Haleswelle. He did it in 1854, and in the next room there is a specimen of his landscape art of last year—an admirable painter! I sat to Haleswelle for the 'Dodger' of *Oliver Twist*, in the trousers I still use in the part; they are a first-rate property, really old from age, no patches, no artificial rags, the dilapidations the real work of

of criminal history may, perhaps, maintain that if William Ringold Cooper be acknowledged as King of the Forgers, the title of Emperor of that ilk should be accorded to the infamous Wainwright, surgeon, essayist, artist, and critic, the "Janus Weathercock" of the *London Magazine*; the *confrère* of Northcote, Campbell, and Charles Lamb; the friend of Talfourd, Bulwer, and Dickens. Wainwright, indeed, might claim imperial rank in the domain of infamy, for he was a murderer and a seducer as well as a forger. During a long series of years this astonishing villain continued to betray innocent young girls, to insure their lives for large sums, and then to poison them; but, so crafty were his tactics, so keen his caution, that the crime of murder could never be brought home to him; and at last the insurance offices, yearning to be rid for good and all of this monstrous caitiff, offered to forego the capital charges if he would plead guilty to a transportable felony. This he did, and, being sent to New South Wales, was liberated after a time on ticket-of-leave. For awhile he earned a struggling livelihood as a miniature painter at Sydney, but he died at last in abject misery and abandonment.

time ; they were given to me by Robert Wyndham, of the Edinburgh Theatre, when first I played the 'Dodger' there. They had belonged to Murray,² who had the theatre before Wyndham, a clever fellow, but though he was manager, he played minor characters ; he wore those trousers for a small part which he played in a version of the *Heart of Midlothian* ; Scott saw him and was very complimentary about his performance ; Mackay was the great Scotch actor of the time ; he was in the piece, but Scott seemed to be especially pleased with the realization of the little part played by Murray.³ The trousers were old

² Mr. W. Murray was famous both as actor and manager. Mr. C. J. Dibdin, whose "Annals of the Edinburgh Stage" is a notable contribution to the history of the drama, mentions his first appearance, on November 20th, 1809, as "The Count" in *Lovers' Vows*, among the landmarks of Scotch theatrical history. "Murray's connection with the Edinburgh stage was probably of more importance to it than that of any other man who ever lived."

³ Writing to his friend Terry, on the 18th of April, Scott says :—"Murray has netted upwards of 3000*l.* on *Rob Roy* ; to be sure the man who played the 'Bailie' made a piece of acting equal to whatever has been seen in the profession. For my part, I was actually electrified by the truth, spirit, and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living 'Nicol Jarvie ;' conceited, pragmatistical, cautious, generous, proud of his connection with 'Rob Roy,' frightened for him at the same time, and yet extremely desirous to interfere with him as an adviser. The tone in which he seemed to give him up as a lost man after having provoked him into some burst of Highland violence—"Ah ! Rab, Rab !"—was quite inimitable. I do assure you I never saw a thing better played." The following is also from Scott's pen. It is an extract from a letter to Miss Joanna Baillie, and although written two years later than the former extract, is best inserted here :—"Mackay is going up to London to play 'Bailie Nicol Jarvie' for a single night at Covent Garden, and I beg you of all dear loves to go and see him ; for taking him in that single character, I am not sure I ever saw anything in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time. . . . In short, I never saw a part better sustained. I pray

when Murray wore them in that very part; Charles Dickens saw me play the 'Dodger' in them, and I told him their pedigree, and how Sir Walter had seen them. Dickens was very much interested; it seemed to make him thoughtful, and he mentioned the name of Scott with something like reverence."



MR. TOOLE AS "THE ARTFUL DODGER."

"The age of that fine property in the way of trousers is considerably over half a century!" I suggested.

"They are eighty years old if they are a day, you to collect a party of Scotch friends to see it. I doubt whether the exhibition will prove as satisfactory to those who do not know the original from whom the resemblance is taken. I observe the English demand, as is natural, broad caricature in the depicting of national peculiarities."—"Dibdin's Annals of the Edinburgh Stage."

as my friend Jones, of Leeds, would say," he replied. "At Edinburgh four or five years ago, when I had occasion to make a speech, I told them what was a fact, that I met in Princes Street an old Scotch friend who said he hoped I was putting my money away for a rainy day, and recommended me to take example by the thrift of the Scotch people, who, while they lived well and treated their friends, were a careful race. I said I did not think there was a Scotchman who was more careful than I myself, and I was sure he was not so careful in the matter of trousers. How did I mean? he asked; I said I was still wearing a pair of trousers that were given to me five and thirty years ago!"

IV.

THE reader will forgive the chronicler if he pauses here to remark, in a rather long stage "aside," that the occasion of the speech in question was a complimentary supper given to Mr. Toole by the Pen and Pencil Club, Edinburgh, under the presidency of Dr. Andrew Wilson, with Messrs. J. Miller-Craig and W. G. Stevenson as croupiers. In response to the toast of his health, proposed in genial terms by the Chairman, Mr. Toole, as reported in *The Scotsman*, replied as follows (the reference to the trousers being cut out in no doubt a judicious and necessary condensation of the comedian's rambling remarks):—

"He was deeply touched with the great compliment which they had paid him by being there that night. He thanked the Chairman very heartily and sincerely for the genial way in which the toast had been proposed, and for the way in which the audience had received it. Recently he had been the guest of two of the most brilliant orators—Lord Rosebery and the Prime Minister. He was

no politician, but he had partaken of their hospitality, and he only wished he had a little of their power of oratory. But if they would allow him just to ramble on in his own way he would feel a little more at his ease. (Cheers.) He stated that his first engagement in Edinburgh was at the Theatre Royal in Princes Street, where the General Post Office now was, with Robert Wyndham, the father of his dear friend Wyndham who was sitting there, who made his first appearance in Edinburgh before him, for young Wyndham was two months old when he (Toole) arrived. (Laughter.) It was a great pleasure to see him so much esteemed, and to see him occupy the proud place of co-partner with his friend Mr. Howard in one of the most charming theatres. He spoke of having played with one of the sweetest and gentlest of ladies in Edinburgh—Miss Nicol. He had the good fortune of becoming acquainted with Mr. Russel, and of very often meeting him. He also became acquainted with the late President of the Pen and Pencil Club, Sir Daniel Macnee, and Mr. David Roberts, the great artist, who proposed him for the Garrick Club in London. He had many delightful recollections. He remembered getting married (laughter), and he thought the best thing he could do was to spend his honeymoon in Edinburgh. He had often played the Mock Duke in *The Honeymoon* since (laughter), but on that occasion he was the real Duke (renewed laughter), in comfortable lodgings in Greenside Street. He remembered very well his first little savings. He had had a benefit in the old Theatre Royal, and he was told to put his twenty or thirty pounds away in the British Linen Company. His wife was rather doubtful; she thought it was a laundry. (Laughter and cheers.) But when he was taken to St

Andrew Square and saw the building he had more confidence. (Loud laughter.) He deposited his twenty or thirty pounds there, and he used often to find himself strolling into St. Andrew Square to see that the building was there. (Renewed laughter.) He sometimes looked at it now, and he would not mind having some shares in it. He remembered insuring his life in Edinburgh in the North British, in Princes Street, and he made it a point to pay his premium regularly—that they made him do. (Loud laughter.) They took a very kindly interest in him. And when he dropped in there they looked as if they wanted to feel his pulse. Mr. Toole then gave some anecdotes of his acquaintance with Irving, Sims Reeves, and other actors, and in closing, referring to the chairman's remarks about his being a Scotchman, he said he sometimes tried Scotch stories among his friends in London, but he always left off telling them when he passed Carlisle. He, however, remembered the lines—

‘Fareweel Littlejohn, Downen, and Blair,
I’ll never sup kail wi’ ye ony mair.’

(Laughter.) He concluded by again heartily and sincerely thanking them for the honour they had done him. He would regard this as a red-letter day, or rather night, in his existence.”

V.

“OH, by the way,” continued Toole, “here is a picture by Montagu Stanley, a celebrated Edinburgh actor. He was an admirable Crichton, poet, painter, preacher. He is buried on the Clyde. He was with Murray—was, in fact, his great star. In those days the popularity of a stock actor was a matter of great importance to a manager, especially when the local star was content to

remain in the provinces, and had no hankering after London. Stanley was of great value to Murray; but he made up his mind to leave the stage and go into the Church. Long before he told Murray of this determination he had given his confidence to some Church friends. He did not like telling Murray, because he knew it would trouble him. More than once he delayed entering upon his new duties, because he shrunk from giving his friend pain; but Murray had become acquainted with his decision. The secret had not been kept, and Murray was much annoyed that Stanley had taken his confidence elsewhere; so when at last Stanley felt the time had really come when he could keep the announcement back no longer, he found Murray prepared with not a very kind reply. 'Going to leave the stage, are ye?' said Murray. 'Well, it is about time, I'm thinking; ye've done all ye can in the drama!' The cut was keenly felt by Stanley, but after a time the manager told him how he had been tempted to say the unkind thing, and how he did not mean it, and so the old friendship was renewed. Stanley became famous as a preacher."⁴

⁴ "An engagement with Charles Kean opened on April 9th, 1838, and concluded with the season on the 28th of the same month, when Montagu Stanley made his last appearance on any stage, playing 'Laertes' to Kean's 'Hamlet.' Believing that the life of an actor was not consistent with a religious life, he sacrificed his profession to his conscience. After leaving the stage he gave lessons in drawing, elocution, fencing (at which he was very expert), and in playing the flute, besides following his favourite pursuit of painting, to which he latterly devoted himself entirely. He died of consumption in the Isle of Bute, May 4th, 1844. He seems to have been of a very gentle and lovable nature, liked by all who knew him, and though, for obvious reasons, he mixed very little latterly with his fellow-actors, they all respected him as a good, conscientious man. Stanley seems to have been a sound, judicious actor, who never offended, and, as might be expected from a man of

VI.

By this time we have returned to the cosy little front room, with its "old arm-chair," its heavy *portière*, its glowing fire, and the hum of outside life and bustle, "the everlasting music of London."

"The painting you were noticing in the dining-room, 'A Wet Day at Greenock,' is by Atkinson Grimshawe, of Leeds," continues my host, "and here is a sketch of Miss Woolgar and myself in *The Willow Copse*; beneath it is a photograph of Brough and myself as the two old men in *Dearer than Life*. The work of developing the negative was a longer business than it is now; so while the artist was at work, Brough and I, in our rags—it was a warm day in June—walked out into Grosvenor Square and called at the house of a certain would-be swell, who prided himself on his money, and was a great snob, so everybody said. The door was opened by a gorgeous footman. 'Master in?' we asked. 'No, he is not,' said the flunkey, with a disdainful stare at our rags, and thoughts, no doubt, of the policeman round the corner. 'Not in! Tell him his two brothers from the Workhouse called to see him.' That

reading and cultivation, his renderings were sensible and scholarly. At the same time he had his failings, among which could be reckoned coldness and stiffness in action. He was also inclined, occasionally, to substitute noise for real passion. There is no doubt, too, that with his growing disapproval of the stage his acting did not improve, for it is scarcely to be supposed that he could throw himself *con amore* into what he did at best from necessity, and not from liking. One of his best parts was 'Robert Macaire,' in which the mixture of broad farce and melodrama seemed to suit him exactly."—"The Annals of the Edinburgh Stage," by James C. Dibdin. 1888.

flunkey, I expect, would look down on his master ever afterwards.

"Here is a portrait of Macklin, who played 'Shylock,' as you know, when he was a hundred years old; here is a picture of Widdicombe and Mrs. Glover; and this is an interesting work, an unfinished portrait of Stephen Kemble as 'Falstaff,' by Clint. Sir John Millais admired it immensely



"TELL THE GOVERNOR HIS TWO BROTHERS FROM THE WORKHOUSE
CALLED."

the other day; said it was very clever. On your right is a photograph of Paul Bedford, myself, and Billington, done by the instantaneous process, the first time they did photographs quickly. Paul had posed himself by the mantelshelf and did not hear the artist say it was all over; so we let him remain standing until he was tired. At last he said, 'Oh, bother this, dear boys, I'm cramped; when is the focussing going to finish?' 'It has

been finished and the picture taken long ago,' we said. Here is a character portrait of Charles Mathews in the first part he played in London, and the quaint-looking little boy, dressed like a clergyman, is De Wilde's original drawing of Mathews, reproduced in the 'Life of Mathews,' by Charles Dickens, Jun., and about which Charles Mathews says—but here's the book and here's the chapter:—

“ ‘My father's nickname in his early days had been, in allusion to his very thin figure, “Stick,” rather an ominous appellation for an actor—I was therefore, as a natural consequence, dubbed “Twig,” and as the cottage had been taken mainly for my health, it was honoured by the distinguished title of “Twig Hall.” It was a mere nutshell, nothing more—a real “cottage” not a “cottage of gentility,” pronounced, upon the authority of the poet, to have been so dear to the devil, whose favourite vice was “pride that apes humility”—but a little rural snugger, and it became the resort of many witty and accomplished people, who there threw off their town manners, and gave way to the merriness of their hearts. Of course I was too young to enjoy their wit, but I appreciated their gaiety; and who knows how much this early association with pleasant people may have helped to give a cheerful tone to the rest of my existence? It has been said that “just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined,” and I certainly must have got a twist or two, here at starting, likely to influence the direction of my subsequent growth. With Geo. Colman, Theodore Hook, James and Horace Smith—the authors of the “Rejected Addresses”—Dubois, Liston, Charles Young, Charles Kemble, the beautiful and accomplished Harriet Mellon, afterwards Duchess of St. Albans, and many other

such celebrities of the day for playmates, it would have been a marvel if I had not been a little tinged with the colour of their minds, and led by their example to take a joyous view of life. Besides the familiar sobriquet of "Twig," I was almost as generally spoken of as the "little parson," and as an appropriate birthday offering, one of our waggish friends presented to me a complete little parson's suit of black—old-fashioned square-cut coat, long-flapped waistcoat, knee-breeches, worsted stockings, shoes and buckles, white bands, &c.—attired in which I was lifted on the dining-table to drink the healths of the "Tompany." The drawing of me in my clerical costume by De Wilde bears the date of June, 1807, which would make my age at that time just three years and a half, which I fancy may be safely taken as my earliest appearance in character.' "

VII.

WHEN I have marked the above passage for future reference, Toole thoroughly wound up for talk, as you will have observed, says he feels like a showman taking me round his menagerie. "Only want a pointer and a little of this style" (imitating the old Richardson manner): "Here you observe the two-headed hyena of the woods, a natural phenomenon such as the world has never seen, except in this world-famed collection, which has been exhibited before all the crowned heads of Europe!" "Just now I felt like 'Charles' in *The School for Scandal*, and was nearly inviting you to give me a bidding; but you looked so serious that I hadn't the heart."

"For my part," I replied, "I felt rather like a man in possession, making an inventory—hope the reader will take a higher view of the result."

"You have certainly taken possession of me,"

said my host. "I never before felt so competent to go on talking about myself; you are such a first-rate audience, that's the reason, I suppose. But while I think of it, that notion of the show-man reminds me of a fancy I have often had of giving an entertainment something after the style of Mathews—*Toole at Home*. I thought of a pretty drawing-room stage, nicely furnished, taking a hint from Albert Smith's platform at the



"TOOLE AT HOME."—AN IDEA.

Egyptian Hall; I used to enjoy going to Smith's afternoons. I would have made the theatre a continuation of the stage, as it were, so as to give the idea of afternoon tea, and then I would have come on and told the audience stories, or given them sketches of character, or humorous bits of experience; I would have had no costume—a sort of pleasant, chatty, sketchy, *Trying a Magistracy* affair. I thought of it all again the other day at Aix, and when I was there I did it

in my own mind, arranged my stage in King William Street, had a pretty back-cloth of the Savoy mountains, a nice *al fresco* kind of *salon* furnished down to the footlights, a few flowers, a palm or two, and all in taking style; and I gave my visitors sketches of the odd people I had met at Aix, the bathers, the loungers, the roulette players, the tourists, and the whole thing; and it was a great success. I applauded myself, and enjoyed it very much. What do you think? Could I make a real audience enjoy it?"

"I am sure you could," I said. "I think you might go round the world with such an entertainment—a little music, say, thrown in?"

"Oh, I would have some music! Do you remember the story of the fellow whom Thackeray had chaffed getting even with him over his lecture on the Georges? 'I went to your lecture, Thackeray,' he said. 'Indeed. I hope you liked it?' 'Oh, yes. With a piano I think you will be able to make the thing a success.' I don't think I tell the story correctly, but Thackeray was a very sensitive man. I can imagine the piano being anything but a harmonious suggestion. I met him once or twice, and heard him sing his 'Little Billee.'"

"Referring to your idea of *Toole at Home*," I said, "do you know that before he came to London and made his first success here, Irving had thought of arranging a dramatic entertainment in which he would be the sole performer?"

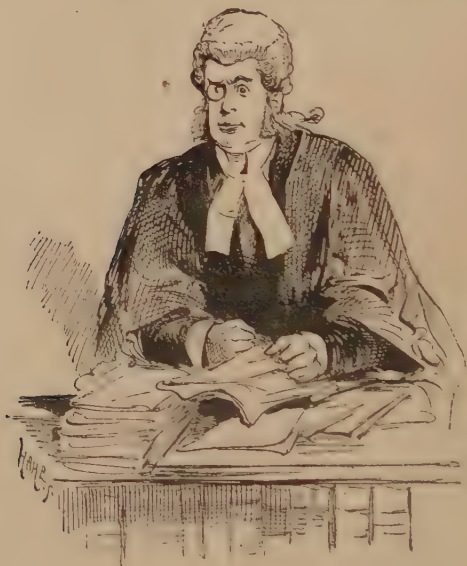
"No, I don't remember that he ever mentioned it to me," replied my host.

"The idea was a good one, and it is interesting to recall it. He had even gone so far as thinking out the title, which was to be *Readings in the Firelight*, or *Stories told in the Inglenook*, or something in that direction. His plan was to

have the stage or platform furnished as an old interior, a library say, with an inglenook, a fire burning on the hearth, the lighting cleverly arranged to suit his work; he would have told his audiences weird dramatic stories, possibly with music off the stage, and other effects; but he would not have confined the entertainment entirely to tragedy, he would have had daylight as well as firelight in the old room; his design was to have an original framework written to suit the various pieces, recitations, and stories."

"And a capital notion, too!" exclaimed my host, "if he had done it he would have made a hit with it; I am glad he didn't, or he might never have had a theatre, which would have been a bad thing for the Stage; he would have had a hall, though; it was never anything more than a matter of time and patience with Irving; he was always looking forward, if not with entire confidence, always with hope and courage. We gave an entertainment together in Glasgow, Irving and I, years ago, in aid of the sufferers from a Great Bank failure—two hours of Tragedy and Comedy. It was repeated on two mornings; one day Irving began with his recitations. I followed with mine; the next day comedy was first and tragedy followed. Irving was acting at night in Edinburgh, I was playing in Glasgow. Irving recited 'Belshazzar's Feast,' 'The Uncle,' 'Eugene Aram;' I 'tried a magistrate,' did the 'Buzfuz Speech,' delivered some comic lectures—one of my own and two that Blanchard wrote for me. The affair was a great success, and we handed over nearly 800*l.* to the fund. By the way, when I first played 'Buzfuz' in the trial scene at the Gaiety, I was very anxious to have a correct wig and gown, and asked Serjeant Ballantyne's advice about the matter. He replied by

sending me his own serjeant's dress, the wig with a little patch in the centre, the little silk coat, bib, and gown complete. I was to use them until such time as I could have them properly copied by my costumier. They came to me in a tin box, looking very serious and legal. On the first night that I wore them Serjeant Parry sat at one end of the stalls and Serjeant Ballantyne at the other. The next day I received a very kind and complimentary



MR. TOOLE AS "SERGEANT BUZFUZ."

note from Serjeant Ballantyne, asking me to accept the robes and wig—a gift I hope I duly appreciated. It was as thoughtful as it was gracious. I can't tell you how proud I felt. And here is Grimaldi's snuff-box. It was given to me by Grimaldi's successor, Tom Matthews, who has long lived in retirement at Brighton. He had bequeathed the relic to me in his will; but one day when I called on him he gave it to me. You

said you wanted to see my two albums of autographs and sketches; come into the Library."

VIII.

My host has told us that he has not time to read much beyond the literature connected with his work. I find on his well-arranged bookshelves the works of Shakspeare, Dickens, Thackeray, Lever, Scott, Bret Harte, Washington Irving, Macaulay, some presentation copies of recent novels, the lives of many actors, copies of a few choice books of plays and travels, and a miscellaneous collection of standard and current works such as men buy and collect for reading and not for show.

The Albums are five handsome volumes, full of autographs ancient and modern, accompanied here and there with sketches, caricatures, engravings, many of them valuable, all of them interesting; but for the purposes of these papers it is only desirable to mention what may be called its epistolary treasures. One of the first letters in the collection is as follows:—

"Marlborough House, Pall Mall,

"31st January, 1882.

"DEAR MR. TOOLE,—The Prince of Wales desires me to beg your acceptance of the accompanying pin as a *souvenir* of your visit to Sandringham the other day.⁵ His Royal Highness

⁵ "THEATRICALS AT SANDRINGHAM.—The secret that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had specially requested another important dramatic performance for the amusement of his own personal and private guests has been admirably kept. This time the scene was moved from Abergeldie to Sandringham, and that popular comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole, was asked to arrange a pleasant evening's entertainment with the aid of his company from the Folly, hereafter to be called Toole's Theatre. Last night, everything having been satisfactorily and diplomatically organized by Mr. J. L. Toole and his clever

directs me to take this opportunity of repeating what he has already said as to the great pleasure which your performance gave both to the Princess of Wales and himself, and how much it was appreciated by them, as well as by everybody present.

“ Believe me,

“ Yours truly,

“ FRANCIS KNOLLYS.”

After this comes the following, from the same address :—

“ The Equerry-in-Waiting is desired by the Prince of Wales to invite Mr. J. L. Toole to dinner at 8.30 on Sunday, February 19th.

“ An answer is requested.”

On the next page is the Royal *menu*,⁶ which those

manager, Mr. George Loveday, the company came over from Bury St. Edmunds, where they had been acting, and appeared on a bijou stage which had been erected at Sandringham House as a surprise to the Princess and her assembled guests. The pieces selected were *Our Clerks*, *The Steeplechase*, and *Ici on parle Français*, all favourites with the Prince some twenty odd years ago at the Adelphi, and a most enjoyable evening was spent, thanks to the vivacity and humour of this excellent comedian, who had here a fine field for the display of his ability. It was said by all present that Mr. Toole had never acted so well before, and certainly he has seldom had such an appreciative and enthusiastic audience. It is not improbable that this will not be the only performance by ‘ special request ’ at Sandringham.”—*Daily Telegraph*, January, 1882.

⁶ Some correspondence appeared in the press on the publication of this souvenir of a royal dinner, the outcome of which was an expression of opinion that the Marlborough House *menu* might be taken as a practical rebuke to those ostentatious dinner-givers with whom the elaborate length of their *menu* is the chief consideration. If this little extract from Mr. Toole’s album should tend to lessen the number of dishes at both private and ceremonial dinners it will surely serve a good purpose. The fashion of many dishes and very varied bills of fare is a pernicious one ; and does not interpret the art of *la gourmandise* as the French and English masters, Brillat Savarin and Mr. Original Walker, understood and practised it.

readers who are not accustomed to dine with Royalty will no doubt like to examine. It runs as follows:—

Marlborough House,
Dîner du 19 Février, 1882.

Huîtres.

POTAGES.

Consommé à la Printanier.
Bisque de Homard.

POISSONS.

Cabillaud, sauce aux Huîtres.
Filets de saumon en Matelote.

ENTRÉES.

Côtelettes d'Agneau.
Mauviettes à l'Allemande.

RELEVÉS.

Poulardes à l'Estragon.
Bœuf rôti.

RÔTI.

Faisans.

Gélinottes de Russie.

Asperges.

ENTREMETS.

Plum Pudding.
Pain de Mandarin à la Chantilly.

Glace à la Napolitaine.

Then come letters from Horace Seymour, inviting Mr. Toole to breakfast with the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone at Downing Street; Savage Club festival menus, social and friendly letters from the Duke of Beaufort, Lord Rosebery, Lady Burdett-Coutts, the Duchess of Bedford, Frank Holl, Keeley Haleswell, Du Maurier, Whistler, Long, Tenniel, Quain, Ballantyne, Julius Benedict, Sims Reeves, Byron, Gilbert, Buchanan, Yates, Irving, Burnand, Talfourd, Charles Reade, Charles

Dickens, Bancroft, Frith, Millais, Leighton, and many other equally familiar names,⁷ which are in

⁷ One of the letters which Mr. Toole most prizes and the prayer of which, with Mr. Hollingshead's assistance, he was delighted to grant, is the following characteristic epistle:—

“Belle Vue Mansions, Brighton,

“August 6th, 1873.

“MY DEAR TOOLE,—Were you ever in a mess? If you never were I can explain it to you, having been in several; indeed I don't mind confessing to you that I am in one now, and, strange to say, you are perhaps the only man who can get me out of it. You need not button up your pockets, it isn't a pecuniary one. Only fancy! after thirty years' practice and experience I have made a mistake in my dates, and for the first time in my life find myself engaged to two managers at the same time. Now they say a man cannot serve two masters, but I CAN if they will come one after the other, only one at a time, one down, t'other come on; but to play at Bristol and the Gaiety on the same night (and keep it up for a week), I don't see my way to accomplish. In a moment of enthusiasm I engaged to begin with Chute on September 29th, and I had scarcely done so when Hollingshead reminded me that I was booked to begin with him on that date, and that it could not be altered. Conceive my dismay. Chute holds fast—‘can't be altered,’—so does Hollingshead—‘can't be altered.’ Now, Toole—*dear* Toole, BELOVED Toole—can't you stay a week longer at the Gaiety? CAN'T you let me begin there on Monday, October 6th (as I thought I did) and get me out of my dilemma? Can't you make this sacrifice to friendship and put three or four hundred more into your pocket? Virtue is not its own reward, but an extra week of fine business is. Now, Toole—adored Tooley—the best of men—first of comedians—most amiable of your sex—burst into tears—throw your arms and sob out, ‘Do with me as thou wilt—play me another week—pay me another three hundred and be happy.’ Breathless with anxiety, yet swelling with hope, I must await your answer. Pity the sorrows of a poor old man, and even telegraph ‘Yes,’ rather than keep me in suspense. What's a week to an able-bodied low comedian? Child's play! Why, you'll be wanting to throw in morning performances as well to keep you from rusting. It really is a *chance* for you—avail yourself of it and bless me, and I'll bless *you*, and Hollingshead will bless us both, and Chute will bless us all.

“With my intermediate blessing, ever faithfully yours,

“C. J. MATHEWS.”

the owner's estimation of far more value than "the letters of men ever so illustrious that are not written to me;" as he says, "one likes to keep these tokens of men one has known, and there is something very tender, I think, in the look of a letter from an old friend who has passed away; I am not at all morbid, quite the reverse, but I sometimes find myself in the mood to spend an hour among such of my letters and pictures as have become relics of those who are gone and whom one knew intimately; one can never get up a very deep feeling of regret about people one has not known, however much one may admire them; but let us go back to the snuggery."

"And begin your reminiscences in downright earnest," I said, "from the day that our friend Blanchard first met you in the country, a little boy down from London for a holiday."

"Very well; you *are* a fellow to drive ahead!"

"Imagine you are giving that At Home," I suggested, "and the first story is an account of your early life, how you went upon the stage, where, why and how, with your experiences between the acts, and so on."

"I will try."

"You will never have a more interested audience," I said, "though I come in with an order."

"A regular Oliver-Twister, always wanting more," he said, laughing; "but you must give me a few minutes to think. I often wish I could smoke; perhaps if you have a cigar it will help me: always think it must be soothing to smoke, settles you down they say; never settled me down, quite the other way. Wasn't it Byron who made one of his ne'er-do-well heroes, who was advised to settle down, say '*Settle down*, that's easy enough; my only difficulty is to *settle up*'?"

V.

CHILDHOOD, BOYHOOD, MANHOOD.

A little London boy in the country—Truant and playgoer in the city—East-end and city theatres—Toole as “Antonio,” “Jacob Earwig,” and “Daggerwood”—First appearances on the regular stage—Clerk in a wine-merchant’s office—The murder of O’Connor—Sergeant Ballantyne and Charles Kean—Toole’s first appearance as a professional actor—From Dublin to Edinburgh—A bad omen turns out well—Hard work—Farewell as a stock actor—Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wyndham—Dublin wit—First appearance as a professional actor in London—St. James’s and the Lyceum—On tour as a star—First meeting with Irving—A compact.

I.

“It was towards the close of an Autumn day, in the year 1838,” writes that most genial and accomplished of critics, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, “when passing through the village of Shorne, where I had been exploring the green lanes of the neighbourhood, that I fortuitously witnessed the following scene:—A little boy, scarcely six years of age, was the centre of an admiring group of urchins, who seemed in a most exuberant state of delight at each fresh comicality of the entertainment, which seemed to consist of an imitation of the sounds of a farm-yard, with a few dexterous voices thrown in.

“It was over before I could discover the reason for the merry peals of childish laughter which reached me, but in a few moments the extremely juvenile monologist recommenced his performance, without being aware that another person had been added to his audience. A dexterous arrangement of his pinafore, a twist of his child’s cap, and a small stick snatched from the hedge, and there was the miniature figure of an old man tottering

rather than toddling about the little garden, the few words uttered in simulated tones helping to identify a resemblance which evidently kept the diminutive spectators in no doubt as to the fidelity of the likeness. Then came a change of face, another re-adjustment of the pinafore, and an altered tone, with a word and a whistle by turns. This was quickly accepted as the faithful por-



MR. E. L. BLANCHARD.

traiture of a comic countryman, well-known to the highly appreciative little assembly, and tiny hands were clapped gleefully as the voice of the rustic, simulated in childish treble, was heard to proclaim the necessity of giving to an old grey man. On my nearer approach, the festive company, enter-

tainer and all, subsided into bashfulness. On making inquiry as to the name of the precocious young gentleman, I was told by a giggling little damsel that it was only John Toole, a little London boy down for his health."¹

"Yes, it is quite true," says my host, "I have a glimmering recollection of the incident; but I



have seen it so often in print that I can swear to every circumstance of the little comedy which my

¹ Mr. E. L. Blanchard has recently retired from the field of active journalism after the devotion of a long life to criticism, miscellaneous literature, and dramatic writing. His father was a distinguished comedian, and at an early age the son became a constant contributor to dramatic and periodical literature. At five-and-twenty he was editor of *Chambers's London Journal*. A few years later he edited "Willoughby's Shakespeare," wrote entertainments for Woodin, Miss Emma Stanley, and other popular public performers, and supplied a couple of novels to the *Temple Bar*. For over thirty years he wrote the Christmas pantomime for Drury Lane; and for five-and-twenty years he was an honoured and active member of the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*. Mr. Blanchard is a ripe scholar, a most amiable and entertaining companion, a true friend, and in all the wide world one may venture to say he has not an enemy.

good friend Blanchard has immortalized. I cannot give you the names of the urchins ; I daresay if I could it would be shown that, as by dint of my natural proclivities I have grown up into a comedian, the urchins in question have developed into playgoers, who more particularly appreciate comedy. I should not wonder that the giggling little damsel is now the mother—perhaps the grandmother, who knows?—of half-a-dozen other giggling little damsels, who have all inherited their mother's appreciation of genuine fun, and that they are among the most constant frequenters of Toole's Theatre. It is an advantage to be a comedian, because one can be arrogant without seeming to be so, one can compliment one's self as if one were only joking ; the low comedian, more especially, can say all kinds of things which he really means, but which he knows will be taken as badinage, chaff, fun, everything but what it is ; there are many true words said in the way of make-believe ; but you wish me to be serious and I will ; for we have to come to a serious point, eh ? my birth, my childhood, my start in life—I might say *three* serious points, but I won't."

II.

"I WAS born in St. Mary Axe, in the City of London, on March 12th, 1832, a younger son, and therefore, as in the case of the aristocracy, had my way to make. I always think it is rather unfair that the eldest son should be born to the title and estates, while the younger has to be content with a choice of the professions. However, there is a certain amount of freedom in the position, and, like my friend Lewis Wingfield, I went in for the Stage.

"But I am anticipating. As I said before, I was born in the city, and will now add that I

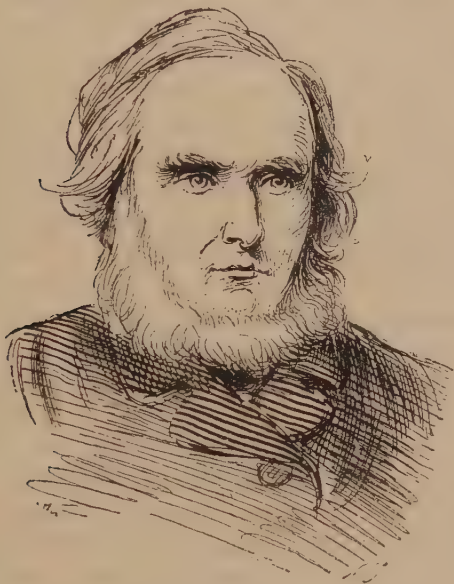
lived in the city, played marbles in the city, went to school in the city, played truant in the city, saw my first play in the city, and my first public dinner, and that to this day I love the city with all my heart—a strange, powerful, queer, dear old place, full of odd nooks and corners even now, although the architects and builders have been trying to wipe out its most cherished landmarks ever since I was a boy.

“ My father, as you know, was the City Toast Master,—a position quite equal in importance, I used to think when I was a boy, to that of the Lord Mayor—I know that one of the great public banquets, at which I assisted in the ladies’ gallery, appeared to be entirely my father’s affair ; nobody else seemed to have anything to do with it ; everybody appeared to do exactly what he told them, whether it was to speak, to sit down, to cheer or to sing songs and glees, including ‘ God save the Queen,’ which they did sing with all their might, the ladies joining in the chorus.

“ If I ramble somewhat about my early recollections, you must not mind ; it will be unconventional, as you say, and what I forget at the moment I shall pick up later on. I remember seeing Sheridan Knowles play in *The Hunchback* at the City of London Theatre, which was more or less my happy hunting-ground. It stood in Norton Folgate, near the present Standard Theatre. I thought it an odd, remarkable kind of performance, and I fear the play did not make a very powerful impression on my youthful mind, though I liked almost anything in the shape of a play, delighted in the sawdusty smell of the theatre, in the gaiety of its light, and in its general odour of sanctity—no, I don’t mean that—I mean mystery. I don’t think I would make a note of that slip, it might

seem like scoffing, and nothing is farther from my nature, but it seemed as if I was using a quotation, don't you know, and I felt bound to finish it. I saw at the same house, E. F. Saville, T. Lyon, and Charles Dillon, before he went to the West-end of town.

“ There was an actor in those days named Dunn,



SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

who was very popular. He was the celebrated ‘ Jim Crow ’—

“ ‘ Turn about and wheel about and dance just so ;
Turn about and wheel about and jump Jim Crow.’ ”

I used to give imitations of these and other actors. I spent all my pocket-money in seeing them act, and nearly all the time I could command in imitating what they did. The East-end houses were very good theatres, and I divided my attention, when absent from the City of London Theatre,

between the Pavilion and the Garrick. E. F. Saville was the famous 'Jack Sheppard' of the period. He was a relative of Helen Faucit. I always went to his benefit, and at that time a benefit meant something to the star: his admirers gathered round him and made much of him. 'Billy Rogers' was also a favourite at the Pavilion; he was the low comedian. The doors were opened at six in the evening, the performance commencing at half-past.

"I am afraid that occasionally, when I went home at night, I did not always give quite a correct account of how I had spent the evening. I am afraid I occasionally said I had been out with Marston, a youthful friend of mine, and I believe that I used the names of other companions as my imaginary hosts, and even referred to the amount of jam they had given me for tea, and so on, pardonable fictions I hope, intended rather to save my parents from worrying about me than to cover up any grave sins. In these days I had not seen a West-end theatre. Mrs. Honner was celebrated as 'Julia' in *The Hunchback*, and Miss Vincent occupied a foremost position in domestic melodrama. Osbaldiston had the City of London Theatre, and years afterwards he managed the Victoria; finally he became lessee of Covent Garden. I saw him in *The Stranger*, which was often played in those days, and thought to be very touching and pathetic."

III.

"A WORD about the Victoria while I think of it. It was originally called the Coburg Theatre, after Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who became King of the Belgians. It failed as the Coburg. After being closed for a long time, it was done up, and reopened as the Victoria, the very year I was

born. It was not of much note when I was a boy ; I never heard of it until I was quite a play-goer. The lessee was prosecuted for playing Shakspeare, the prosecutor being the lessee of Drury Lane, whose patent rights, I believe, gave him certain privileges in regard to performances of the works of the immortal bard. Stanfield, one of the greatest marine-painters, I suppose, that ever lived, began his career as a scene-painter at the Victoria, and it was here that Mr. Peter Borthwick, M.P., made his *début* as ‘Othello ;’ the result did not encourage him to join our immortal profession. He became celebrated in other ways, was a first-rate speaker, enjoyed a successful public career, though not as ‘Othello.’

“ But to resume. Before I went on the stage I played in public, and my first part was at the Sussex Hall, Leadenhall Street. I belonged to the City Histrionic Club.² The members paid for the hall. We gave a performance once a quarter. The audience was large—there was nothing to pay. On my first appearance, the programme opened with the trial scene from the *Merchant of*

² Mr. Robert Rayner, honorary treasurer of “The Ingoldsby Dramatic Club,” calls my attention to the fact that Mr. Toole was also a member of that society, and he encloses me a cutting from a local journal (the *South London Mail*) from which I make the following interesting extract :—“The history of the Ingoldsby Club is a very eventful one. It was founded by Messrs. J. G. Neeld, William Pink, and C. Bunker, on October 25th, 1860. In its very early days it was fortunate in possessing many members of great future promise. Mr. James Albery, of *Two Roses* fame ; Mr. J. J. Dilley, the part author of *Alexander the Great* ; Mr. Sydney Naylor, the pianist ; Mr. William Holland, the people’s caterer ; Mr. R. Strong, J.P. and late M.P. ; Mr. Wyndham, of the Criterion Theatre, and others, were all members and promoters—while Mr. J. L. Toole was a member for the first fifteen years of the club’s existence, and also Miss Eliza Cook, the poetess, then residing in Walworth.”

Venice. We had all agreed that none of us should appear in costume; evening dress was to be *de rigueur*. But our 'Shylock' deceived us. He turned up in the Jewish gaberdine, and with a regular make-up. It was too late, or I think we should have cut him out of his part. As 'Antonio' I was extra bitter on him when he gradually got the Merchant into trouble, and perhaps his breach of agreement after all did no harm, though it must have made the gentlemen in dress-clothes look a little out of it. We had no scenery; the whole thing depended upon art—strict Art, and please to spell it with a capital A. After the 'Trial,' we played the first scene from *Boots at the Swan*. I was 'Jacob Earwig.' Then I gave a recitation, an election speech, a little thing of my own, which I sometimes do now. I was very much to the fore that night; I played in *Sylvester Daggerwood*. It was a popular piece in those days; it is a vehicle for imitations. There is a picture of Bannister and Suet in the two parts at the Garrick Club; the parts are a barrister and an author—'Daggerwood' and 'Fustian.' I gave something like five-and-twenty imitations of popular actors. What a programme it was! The audience got enough for their—orders. It ended with a farce called *The Mummy*, and Keeley Haleswell, the A.R.A., painted the sketches, which the old 'Antiquary' uses in the piece. Haleswell lived in the city—'and was always gay,' I was going to add, quoting the 'Little Fat Grey Man,' which your namesake used to sing so well. We all, for that matter, lived in the city, and Haleswell was one of us, the same clever, pleasant fellow he is to this day, and I have no doubt these property sketches, if we had studied them with knowledge, would have been tokened, in certain unmistakable touches of genius, the future Royal Academician."

IV.

“ON a certain memorable benefit-night at the Pavilion, I was taken behind the scenes. There was an actor who used to give imitations of popular favourites. On this occasion, as Fate would have it, he disappointed the theatre, didn't turn up, couldn't get away from his other place, or was ill, or something or another; but his absence, making an ugly hiatus in the programme, caused a good deal of excitement behind. Now I remember, it was Elphinstone's benefit. A man came up to me and said, ‘Why don't you go on and take Taylor's place? you are quite equal to it, and it would be giving Elphinstone a great lift!’ I shrunk back at the bare idea of it; but the man was very complimentary and pressing, and Elphinstone himself was good enough to say he would be obliged to me if I would go on, since he heard I should fill the bill with efficiency, or words to that effect. I felt my head swimming a little, not only with fear, but also with a desire to go on, and do all I knew. At last, boy as I was, I did it; I went on after an explanation, and gave them one after the other most of the imitations I had been in the habit of giving at our little club, and whenever my companions desired them. The imitations went tremendously, my unknown friend who had proposed I should go on said Taylor was nowhere in comparison with my realization of the peculiarities of the East-end actors; I was delighted; all the fear I had felt disappeared once I was before the footlights.

“At that time I was a clerk in a wine-merchant's office. A day or two after my appearance at the Pavilion, some one came into the counting-house and said they had seen me on the stage. Challenged by one of the firm, I was in such a

funk that I denied it, but in a weak kind of way. After that first taste of the real footlights, I began to dream of becoming an actor in earnest.

"The first time I played to a regular audience, in a regular way, was at Ipswich in 1852, and it was under the name of John Laver. One of our clerks at the wine merchant's had gone on the stage, and was at Ipswich. He took an interest in my ambition, and suggested that I should go



MR. TOOLE'S FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE.

down and appear in the leading man's benefit as 'Sylvester Daggerwood.' If I would consent, he said, he and his friend Hill 'could get me an appearance.' I did consent, said at home I was going on a visit to some friends, and off I went to Ipswich. Kean occasionally played the part of 'Daggerwood,' and gave imitations, as you know.

"My Ipswich experience was very satisfactory.

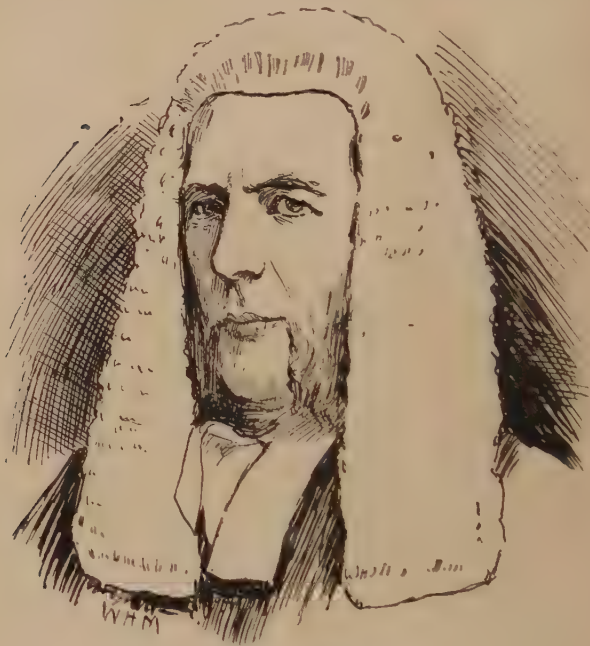
I scored, received the compliments and congratulations of the leading man, a heavy and impressive tragedian ; and I returned to London more than ever determined to give up being a clerk in a wine-merchant's office."

V.

" By the way, when I was that wine-merchant's clerk in the city, I knew O'Connor, whom the Mannings murdered ; he was a gauger, and not at all a pleasant fellow. I used to see him at the Docks ; some of us were in the habit of playing jokes on him, but he did not take them well ; he was grumpy, had no sense of humour—not what we boys called humour, at any rate—and we did not care for him ; but when we heard he had been murdered and buried in quicklime under the hearthstone of his cruel assassins, we were awfully shocked, and indignant also. It created a great sensation as you know—the awful tragedy, as it was rightly called. The capture of the murderers, Mr. and Mrs. Manning, with whom the victim had been on visiting terms, made as much noise as the report of a victorious battle might. It was a case of Lady Macbeth over again ; the woman was at the bottom of the mischief. Long afterwards I talked about it with Serjeant Ballantyne, who defended her, and he was quite ready to confess that he believed she started and partly carried out the awful business. She was a horrible woman, showy, good-looking, and had been lady's-maid in a high family.

" He was a remarkable man, Serjeant Ballantyne ; used to tell good theatrical stories sometimes. He admired Charles Kean in *Louis XI.*, *The Corsican Brothers*, and *Mephistopheles*, and spoke kindly of him, but told funny stories about him. Kean had some quarrel with Albert Smith,

nothing of any moment. Smith had chaffed his acting or something, and Kean was mortally offended. Ballantyne and a friend of Kean's, who had never heard of the quarrel, were talking to Smith in the coffee-room of the Garrick. Kean watched them with a tragic eye. When Smith departed, Kean, folding his arms in a melodramatic way, strode up to his friend and ex-

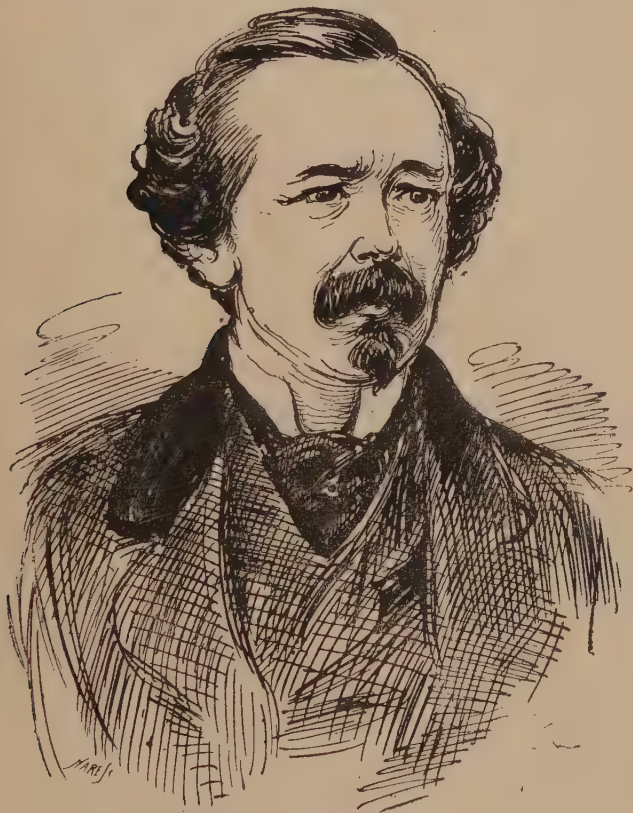


MR. SERJEANT BALLANTYNE.

claimed, 'Richard, my old friend, the friend of my boyhood, I could not have believed that you would have consorted with that viper!'

"There are many odd stories told of Kean, such as the ballet-girls coming to the wings and weeping at his pathos for the sake of his notice and certain little rewards; and on one occasion he is said to have addressed himself in bitter terms

to an old super whom he had seen applauding Ryder, 'Wretch! Thou who hast eaten of my bread; thou who livest on my bounty, how could'st thou be base enough in thy ingratitude to applaud that man!'



MR. CHARLES DILLON.

"Some of these things are no doubt exaggerations, though Charles was particularly greedy of applause, as I fear we all are. It is necessary to us; at least we think so. If an audience doesn't applaud your big scenes, or laugh at your fun, you have reason to believe you are not pleasing

them, and, of course, that must be very depressing—not that I speak from experience in that matter!”

VI.

“WELL, after my Ipswich adventure, I played at the Walworth Institute. We were amateurs; my friend Lowne was one of us, he is a serious city man now. One night Dickens came, and was very complimentary. Forster has mentioned the incident in his ‘Life.’ Dickens more than once referred to the occasion in his kind way, years afterwards, when I came to know him well and to better understand the great genius he was.

“Soon after the Walworth success I took a holiday, and went to Dublin.

“Charles Dillon had heard of me having done something, as he said, at the Walworth Institute, that had been very much liked, and he invited me to play at the Queen’s in the Irish capital. That was a big thing in those days. *The Spitalfields Weaver* was put up for me, and I made an immediate hit as ‘Simmons.’ I sent word to my wine-office people in London that I was not coming back again. I accepted an engagement of two pounds a week, and remained in Dublin for the season. It was at this time that I made the acquaintance of Robson,³ as I have previously

³ “Robson was, indeed, an actor of the highest stamp; in him the extremes of the sublime and the ridiculous came very near meeting—only that his acting ever kept preponderatingly sublime, and that even the loudest burst of laughter that greeted the wonderful little man’s comic play and utterances had in them, maybe unconscious to actor and audience alike, a subdued undercurrent of sobs and tears. Old playgoers who may remember his burlesque renderings of ‘Shylock,’ ‘Macbeth,’ ‘Masaniello,’ and ‘Medea,’ will, I believe, assent to this view.

“I remember his truly marvellous performance of the part of ‘Medea’ in Robert Brough’s burlesque. Before the piece

mentioned. I stayed two seasons with Dillon at Dublin, where Mr. Robert Wyndham, of the Edinburgh Theatre, saw me and offered me an engagement at 3*l.* a week, which I accepted. On the 9th of July, 1853, I made my first appearance on the Edinburgh stage as 'Hector Timid' in the play of *The Dead Shot*. I had travelled from Dublin, and arrived in Edinburgh in the afternoon, very tired and weary. I put up at Milne's Hotel in Leigh Street, and after a rehearsal went to bed, fairly worn out. I left instructions with the landlady to call me and bring me a cup of tea at a certain hour, which would give me plenty of time to get to the theatre; but she forgot her instructions, and I was still sleeping soundly when a messenger arrived from the theatre to inquire for me. The curtain was up. I was in a terrible fright. I sprang out of bed, dressed, rushed to

began, I went behind the scenes with the author, where we found Robson in a state of extreme nervousness, as it had been credibly reported that the lady tragedian, whom he was about to imitate (*not* to travesty, mind, for there truly was nothing of the buffoon pure and simple in Frederick Robson), Madame Ristori, was actually in the theatre. Well, with this overpowering oppression upon him, he contrived to achieve a glorious success. His 'Medea' was a truly grand tragic figure, gracefully draped in a light veil of burlesque. She who had created the intensely tragic character of ill-starred 'Medea' was so deeply impressed by the little man's wonderful tragi-comic reproduction of her own creation—which she had been led to believe by a 'kind friend' of Robson's would turn out a farcical caricature—that she could not refrain from there and then presenting to the great actor the flattering tribute of her gratification and admiration. She came round accordingly at once, escorted by that most courteous of gentlemen and most urbane of noblemen, Earl Granville, who joined the lady in overwhelming the shy man with well-merited compliments. When we had Robson to ourselves again, he cried like a child—partly with pleasure, partly with distress at his nervous awkwardness, which he said 'must have made me look like a fool.'—"Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," 1883.

the theatre, and was just in time to scramble upon the stage and take up my cue. In entering, I stumbled over a mat and almost fell, and this so worried and upset me that throughout the whole piece I was nervous and wretched. Next day, however, I was agreeably surprised to find the critics unanimous in their praise of my acting, specially pointing out how 'appropriate to the character of "Hector Timid" was the uneasy manner and faltering gait of the young comedian.' Everything, you see, had happened for the best, even the carelessness of my landlady, my accident, my nervousness, and all my disasters.

"While I was in Edinburgh during this engagement, Sam Cowell⁴ was at the Royal, singing his well-known and popular songs between the acts. I used also to sing 'Billy Barlow,' introducing fresh verses satirizing the follies of the day, and often getting in some local hits which went immensely. I gained considerable experience in Edinburgh, not only through the constant change of bill, but from acting with the stars who

⁴ "July 1st, 1840, *Robert Macaire*, the part of 'Pierre,' head-waiter, by Sam Cowell, from the Théâtre St. Charles, New Orleans—his first appearance in Europe. According to a sketch of his life published in 1853, his mother was one of Murray's sisters, 'Sam' Cowell being the Edinburgh manager's nephew; his sister married Bateman, the American actor and manager. Cowell was an exceedingly clever comedian, and his musical abilities were considerable. He sang negro songs as he had heard negroes singing them out west. His 'Jim along Josey,' 'Yaller Busha Belle,' and 'Clara Cline' were inimitable performances. On leaving Edinburgh, a few years after this, he at once stepped into good positions in London and the provinces, latterly devoting himself exclusively to comic singing. He married Miss Ebsworth, of the Edinburgh company, and his daughters, Sydney and Florence, became in time great favourites in Edinburgh. He died March 11th, 1864, aged only 43."—"Annals of the Edinburgh Stage," by J. C. Dibdin. 1888.

visited the Scotch capital. Miss Helen Faucit⁵ came, and with her I played 'Touchstone' in *As You Like it*; 'Cloten' in *Cymbeline*; 'Glavis' in *The Lady of Lyons*, and was complimented by the critics; indeed they were most kind to me, and so were the public. I had become a favourite the first week of my appearance, which was a very

⁵ Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) was born in 1819, the daughter of Mrs. Faucit, an actress of remarkable ability. Lady Martin has both acted and read in recent years for charitable objects, and still retains much of that charm of manner which distinguished her acting in the zenith of her popularity. She made her *début* at Covent Garden Theatre on January 5th, 1836, in the character of "Julia," in *The Hunchback* and achieved a distinct and popular success. "From that moment," says the current volume of "Men of the Time," "she took rank as a leading actress, and became the most important member of Mr. Macready's companies during the production of his Shaksperian revivals at Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Miss Helen Faucit was the original representative of the heroines in Lord Lytton's *Lady of Lyons*, *Money*, *The Sea Captain*, *Richelieu*, and the *Duchess de la Vallière*; in Mr. Robert Browning's *Strafford*, the *Blot on the Scutcheon*, and *Colombe's Birthday*; in Mr. Westland Marston's *Patrician's Daughter*, *The Heart*, and *the World*, and *Marie de Meranie*; in Mr. Troughton's *Nina Sforza*; and in many other plays. Her rendering of the Shaksperian characters, 'Juliet,' 'Beatrice,' 'Constance,' 'Imogen,' 'Hermione,' 'Cordelia,' 'Isabella,' 'Portia,' 'Rosalind,' and 'Lady Macbeth,' has been highly commended. Miss Helen Faucit obtained great success in her representation of 'Antigoné,' and in *King René's Daughter*, an adaptation from the Danish, by Mr. Theodore Martin, now Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., to whom she was married in 1851. This lady continued to appear on the stage at rare intervals after her marriage, latterly for public or charitable purposes only, her last appearances being as 'Beatrice' a Stratford-on-Avon, at the opening of the Memorial Theatre there in April, 1879, and at Manchester as 'Rosalind,' in October of that year, for the benefit of the widow of Mr. Charles Calvert, formerly manager of the Princess's Theatre, Manchester. Lady Martin is the authoress of a volume 'On some of the Female Characters of Shakspeare,' viz. 'Ophelia,' 'Portia,' 'Desdemona,' 'Juliet,' 'Imogen,' 'Rosalind,' and 'Beatrice,' published by Messrs. W. Blackwood and Sons, 4to. 1885."

agreeable and important thing for me. Phelps came to Edinburgh on a starring tour, and I played many parts with him, and also with Charles Mathews. I believe I got through 'Antonio,' at the Sussex Hall in the City, with credit, but I did not try that kind of part any more, I went in for the line of business I felt I could master, low comedy, eccentric comedy, and for those serio-comic parts for which I received so much kind encouragement from the press, both of London and the great cities of the provinces. I have played as many as eighteen different parts in a week during my early experiences as a stock actor, some of them new studies entirely ; those were the days when an actor had to work like the proverbial nigger ; it made things easier for him later in his career, of course, but it was hard work, and no mistake ; I have often been studying another part while I have been playing a new one, and many a time, after rehearsal in the morning and acting at night, I have gone home to sit up studying a part for rehearsal the next day.

"After about eighteen months of this severe practical training, I was offered an engagement at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of Mrs. Seymour. Much as I liked Edinburgh, I was glad to try my luck in London. The engagement was not a particularly attractive one, the part in which I was to open being neither low comedy nor high comedy, neither funny nor serious ; nor was it, that I could make out, a character-part in which there was much to be done. But I went to London from Edinburgh, and without taking any formal leave. I opened at the St. James's on October 2nd, 1854, as 'Pepys' in Tom Taylor and Charles Reade's play of *The King's Rival*. The play was not a success. There was something wrong with it ; what, I don't know. George Vanden-

hoff, Tom Meade, and Miss Glyn were in the cast. I had the farce of *My Friend the Major* pretty well all to myself after the piece of the evening. As a sheriff's officer, disguised as a friend, I got along all right, and the next morning received very encouraging and complimentary notices in the papers. There are actors and authors who say they don't read criticisms of their work; I do, and I confess that I have often benefited by hints and suggestions in that way. I afterwards played 'Pierre' in a piece called *Honour before Titles*, at the St. James's, and later filled a season with Miss Lydia Thompson in *The Spanish Dancers*.

"I don't know that I was altogether quite satisfied with these first efforts in town; I did not seem to have had an opportunity of playing the kind of parts I wanted, nor was I associated with what might be called a successful management. I had several offers to remain, but the openings did not attract me, and I went back to Edinburgh and rejoined Mr. Wyndham's stock company in my former position. More hard work, more acting with stars, more new appearances, fresh opportunities of playing what I liked. I was very happy; but in another year was once more tempted to the metropolis, this time by a flattering proposal from Mr. Dillon to join his company as its low comedian. I had had satisfactory experiences of Mr. Dillon in Dublin; he was my first manager, and I felt great pleasure in receiving his offer and also in accepting it.

"When it was known that I was now going to leave Edinburgh for a long and important engagement in London, the public, my personal friends, my fellow-actors, and Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham organized for me a farewell benefit, which was quite a big event at the close of the season. Anxious to please the audience, I arranged a

very varied and comprehensive programme, which included my first appearance as 'Paul Pry: ' I played 'Bottom' in a scene from *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, and imitated Mrs. Florence's 'Yankee Gal' with her characteristic ballad of 'Sing song, Polly, won't you try me Oh!' Mr. and Mrs. Florence, especially the latter, had made a



MR. TOOLE AS "PAUL PRY."

great hit in England in a similar line of business to that of Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams, whose portraits are in the Garrick. The Florences are both admirable comedians, and play with all their former *verve* to this day, and look almost as young as they did—well I will not say how many years ago. Florence's popularity has never waned in

America in public or private, and he is one of the best of good fellows on both sides of the Atlantic, as you know.

“ But to return to my farewell at Edinburgh, as a stock actor, never to appear there again except as a star. After the fall of the curtain for the night, I was most warmly called for, and I made, not quite my first public speech, but it seems to me as I look back that it really must have been my first. I know I was nervous and overcome; the audience was so large, so enthusiastic, and I had received so much kindness from them.⁶ It takes

⁶ “ The greatest assemblage that ever greeted a ‘benefit’ in this city was collected together at the Theatre Royal last evening to bid farewell to our popular comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole. But a few minutes elapsed from the doors being opened until every part of the house was crowded with the admirers of the young and versatile performer—the gallery and pit with the lovers of that broad farce of which Mr. Toole is a master—the boxes and stalls with the critical audience which think him greater still in developing the higher forms of the drama. So great was the crush that Mr. Mackenzie and his band were compelled to beat an early retreat behind the scenes, and their places in the orchestra, although more closely crammed and filled with the critical *élite* which frequent the stalls, were not less harmonious than the unseen musicians.

“ Heavy as the amusements of the night might be to Mr. Toole, they were light to a sympathizing and enthusiastic audience. The programme was fresh, varied, and long. If Mr. Toole appeared in none of the comedies in connection with which we believe his name will be chiefly associated in this city, it is doubtless from a desire, on this the last night of his engagement in Edinburgh, to supply something new as well as most widely acceptable. Hence he appeared for the first time as ‘Paul Pry,’ with complete success, and likewise initiated a farce entitled *Your Life’s in Danger*. In addition to this he appeared in *Domestic Economy*, where with Mrs. Wyndham’s assistance, he vividly realized the old ballad of ‘John Grumley;’ as ‘Bottom,’ in the play-scene from *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and as the ‘Yankee Gal,’ in which character he rendered the quaint ditties of Mrs. Florence with singular felicity. Each separate appearance was a triumph,

time to get at the Scotch people ; they are not impulsive in their friendships ; but when they know you and you know them, when confidence in each other is mutual, they are the staunchest friends you can have. You said, talking on this subject the other day, that good people are very much alike, and show their friendship very much in the same way, whatever their country ; and I suppose this is true : but Northerners seem to be more serious people than Southerners, and more suspicious ; they are apt to entertain doubts of the sincerity of Southern people ; they need to prove you ; and then comes the other side of their character—their firmness, their lasting powers ; they never desert you. Nor do any other friends whom you can call friends, so far as that goes. The Dublin boys have always been true to me, and I have many treasured memories of Dublin.

“ There is no other city in the United Kingdom that is brighter, gayer, more lively than Dublin. Perhaps a little of the gloss has been taken off it during the political agitation of the past few years, but as I knew it best, it *was* one of the most go-ahead, rollicking, jovial cities I ever was in—everybody with a share of the native wit of the Irish people—nobody with anything so pressing to do in the way of business that he could not take his pleasure. When I went starring there, it was customary to make a two-weeks’ engagement, but only to advertise one, the second being announced as in consequence of the success of the first. At the end of the first week I was leaving the theatre by the stage-door. There was the

and when he doffed the professional costume to say a few farewell words, the loud and long-protracted cheers, with the bouquets showered upon him by the fair occupants of the boxes, constituted quite an ovation.”—*Edinburgh Daily Express*, August, 1856.

usual crowd of youngsters begging for coppers, and one, more pressing than the rest, said, 'Ah, Mr. Toole, mi darlint, give us a copper! Didn't I get you the re-engagement by applaudin' ye?'

"It was not a funny speech, the farewell remarks I made on the Edinburgh stage, it was an expression of gratitude for kindnesses I had received, and an assurance that I felt my invitation to act in London to be largely due to the favours I had received at their hands; I thanked everybody, management, colleagues, every part of the house, boxes, pit, gallery, orchestra, and the only laugh I got was in reference to the musicians. When alluding to their places being taken by the audience and their transference behind the scenes, I said, 'for once they are not in the orchestra, but are behind with their services.' It was to me quite a solemn ordeal, this saying farewell, and I felt it keenly; it was no make-believe, and in many respects I have a kind of sensation of home when I go to Edinburgh; and what a lovely city it is! You may travel far to see its match for picturesqueness: and its historical associations make it a story in itself."

VII.

It will be interesting in this place to state that Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wyndham were for many years two of the most indefatigable workers in the theatrical profession. Both of them excellent actors, they managed together the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, with a thorough knowledge of their profession. Many distinguished actors began their careers under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Wyndham, who have in their retirement the great satisfaction of receiving and being received by ladies and gentlemen, who, mere beginners in their Edinburgh Theatre, are now in

the foremost ranks of the profession, more than one or two having won a world-wide celebrity. Edinburgh was a hard school in the good old days of stock companies; it paid small salaries and it exacted laborious service, but its discipline and its traditions made or marred theatrical reputations; it was a school in which the fittest survived and the incapable came to grief. The history of the Edinburgh stage is the history of the rise of many of our best actors past and present. Some ten years ago Mr. Robert Wyndham was entertained at a banquet at the Balmoral Hall, Edinburgh, by 120 leading citizens, "in recognition of his services to the community during a long career as a theatrical manager in that city." Sir Alexander Grant, Bart., Principal of the University, presided. In response to the very complimentary speech in which he proposed the toast of the evening, Mr. Wyndham said:—"Sir Alexander Grant, my lords and gentlemen,—To say that I feel embarrassed would ill express the emotion with which I rise to endeavour to acknowledge even in very inadequate terms the highly eulogistic manner in which you have been pleased to propose the toast of my health, and at the same time to thank my numerous friends present for the warm and enthusiastic manner in which they have been pleased to receive it—an enthusiasm which I fear proceeds more from the warmth of their own hearts than from any legitimate desert on my part. I must confess that my earliest theatrical aspiration was directed towards Edinburgh, and in order to prepare myself for any contingency that might arise, I thought that the proper thing to do under the circumstances was to study the character of 'Young Norval' in the tragedy of *Douglas*, which I accordingly did, and selected at the same time a wide field for the operation, for I committed the words to memory among the

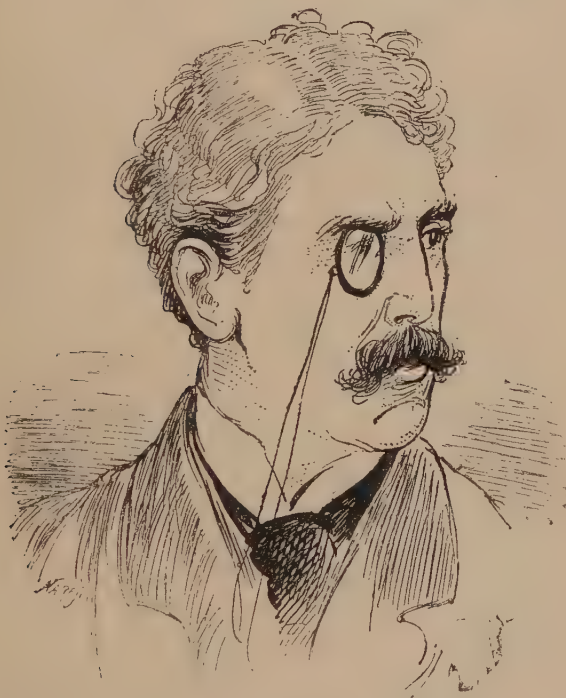
cloisters of Stonehenge, in the middle of Salisbury Plain. (Applause.) I think it was somewhere about the years 1836 or 1837 that I first made my appearance in the good old town of Salisbury ; but I was not very successful, for the local critic of the day stated that he did not think the young gentleman who appeared last night in the character of 'Young Norval' was ever destined to set the Thames on fire. (Laughter.) This was very severe, considering, as Sir Alexander has stated, that I paid the manager 20% for the right to make a fool of myself for one night. (Renewed laughter.) I, however, worked steadily on, undergoing at times all the vicissitudes inseparable from the early career of most professional men, till after many years of probation, I found myself announced to appear at Birmingham in the character of 'Romeo' to the 'Juliet' of Miss Ellen Tree, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean. This was perhaps the most successful engagement I ever played in my life, for it was there I first met my wife. (Laughter and applause.) Subsequently I had the honour of appearing before Louis Philippe at the theatre in the Tuilleries, enacting the character of 'Colonel Freelove' to the 'Lady Elizabeth' of the celebrated Madame Plassy, in the comedietta of *A Day after the Wedding*. At length my time came for appearing in Edinburgh, and never shall I forget the impression made upon me when I first beheld this magnificent city. Coming as I did from Glasgow, where it sometimes rains—(laughter)—I could scarcely fail to be impressed with the sight before me. The Castle, with its green slopes, the Scott Monument, Calton Hill in the distance, with the fine old town, as it were, keeping watch and ward, felicitously illumined with a spring sunshine, filled me at once with admiration at the brilliant sights before me, and with awe to think that I was

so soon to appear before an Edinburgh audience, distinguished at once for its high culture, great intellectual refinement, and critical acumen. I made my first appearance on rather an ominous day—the 1st of April (laughter) in the year 1845, which date counts so far back that my friends frequently joked me, and said I was out in the '45—(laughter)—the character which I played being 'Sir Thomas Clifford' to the 'Julia' of Miss Helen Faucit, in Sheridan Knowles's play of the *Hunchback*, and I believe that on the whole I was tolerably successful. I then laboured hard in my vocation, and upon the secession of Mr. Murray from the Theatre Royal some kind friends insisted, much against my will, that I should undertake the management of the Theatre Royal, assisting me at the time not only with money, but what was, if possible, of equal importance, their hearty goodwill and co-operation. Since then their kindness has known no bounds. They have presented me with everything the heart of man could wish for, and now as a culmination to that kindness they have invited me to this grand banquet, so that now I fear there is nothing left to present me with unless the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council should come to the rescue and present me with the freedom of the city. (Laughter and applause.) Circumstances of a family nature have rendered it desirable that I should reside for a considerable portion of the year in England; but I hope occasionally to revisit the glimpses of the moon—although not I hope to make night hideous—and appear before you in my professional character—(applause)—renewing at once my acquaintance with my old friends, and visiting again what I still hope I may be permitted to call the land of my adoption. But, gentlemen, whether I reside in England, Ireland, or indeed across the broad Atlantic, my

heart must be indeed untrue to its instincts should I ever cease to hold in affectionate remembrance my dear, kind, warm-hearted Edinburgh friends." (Loud applause.)

VIII.

"I OPENED at the Lyceum in September, 1856," continued Mr. Toole, "as 'Fanfaronade,' to



MR. BANCROFT.

Dillon's 'Belphegor,' and with Miss Marie Wilton (now Mrs. Bancroft), who on that occasion made her first appearance in London. Dillon's 'Belphegor' was a fine romantic piece of acting, strong, picturesque, and pathetic. I liked the piece, and the leading man. Miss Wilton, a

clever, merry little actress, was the boy 'Henri,'⁷ and afterwards 'Perdita,' in a burlesque of *The Winter's Tale* called *Radita, or the Royal Milk-maid*, by William Brough, which followed the play of *Belphegor*. Miss Wilton had come to London from Bristol and Bath, where she had been the bright particular star of the local burlesques. Many other prominent actors and actresses were favourites in Bristol before they came to London, notably the Terrys, both Kate and Ellen, Mrs. Kendal, the two Rignolds, Mrs. Labouchere as Miss Hodson, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stirling, the latter as Miss Cleveland.

"I was two seasons with Dillon, and between whiles, when the vacations came, used to go starring, more particularly to Edinburgh, with a small company of my own.

"It was here that I first met Irving about the year 1857; but I did not see much of him at that time; I was only playing a very brief engagement. I met him later at Manchester, where our friendship commenced. He was the leading man at Manchester and was very much liked. He was always a very studious and careful actor, always made remarkable and complete studies of his characters. There was nothing conventional about what he did. He seemed, so to speak, always to have got inside the part he played, and to have learned something new about it; not new in the sense of

⁷ "At the Lyceum I recall Charles Dillon's fine performance in *Belphegor*. I sat that evening by my mother's side, and in the touching scene between the mountebank and his son, we little thought that the pretty girl who made us cry by her pathetic acting as the boy 'Henri,' in which she first appeared in London, would be my future wife. At the beginning of the new year I saw her for the second time as 'The little fairy at the bottom of the sea' in *Conrad and Medora*."—Mr. Bancroft's narrative in "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage."

being simply new, but something belonging to the part that other actors had not found out. He used to go up to Calton Hill in Edinburgh at all hours to study, and somehow this was considered odd, but he was a little odd, that is to those who did not know him. 'Talking of Henry Irving,' a person said to me in Manchester, 'Oh, he's mad, mad as a hatter; he's going to play "Hamlet" one of these days!' Whatever part he played, little or big, he always made it stand out, dressed it characteristically, made it up artistically, worked out every detail and suggestion that could possibly belong to it. I was partly instrumental in inducing him to go to the Princess's, where he made his first appearance in London in a piece called *Ivy Hall*.

"When Irving was a lad he recited at Crosby Hall, London, and I used to recite at Sussex Hall; I often wish we had known each other then. Byron was very fond of Irving, had a great opinion of him; Irving made a big mark as 'Bob Gassitt' in his *Dearer than Life*. I had many a 'Bob Gassitt' to play with me, but never one who played it with the reality and truth that Irving put into the part. One often hears people talk about luck in a man's success, and I have heard it applied to Irving as a reason for his position; but people who speak of Irving in this way do not know how hard he has worked for his success. It was as 'Chevenix' in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, that he impressed Dickens so strongly. Dickens thought him in his make-up and manner a little like Dombey. He said of Irving, 'that young man will be a great actor.'

"What I admire about Irving⁸ is the calm, steady

* "John Henry Brodribb Irving was born February 6th, 1838, at Kinton, near Glastonbury, and educated at Dr. Pinches' school, in George Yard, Lombard Street, London. He

way in which he has marched to the front, and the gentle, gracious, unostentatious way in which

made his first appearance on the boards of the Sunderland Theatre, September 29th, 1856, and came out next at Edinburgh, February 9th, 1857, remaining there for rather more than two years and a half. On September 25th, 1859, he appeared at the Princess's Theatre, where he remained about three months. He proceeded in April, 1860, to Glasgow, the theatre of which town was then under the management of Edward Glover, and remained there until the 29th of the following September. After this he went to Manchester Theatre Royal, and continued to play there up to April 1st, 1865. From January, 1866, to July in that year, he was engaged at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, and on July 30th was engaged to play, with Miss Kate Terry, at Manchester, by Mr. Dion Boucicault, in an original play of his entitled *Hunted Down*. This led to a London engagement, when he came out at the St. James's Theatre as 'Doricourt' in the *Belle's Stratagem*. In December, 1867, he proceeded to the Queen's Theatre, and subsequently acted in the provinces from time to time, as well as at various London houses. In May, 1870, he transferred his services to the Vaudeville Theatre, where he appeared as 'Digby Grant' in Mr. Albery's comedy of the *Two Roses*, which character he sustained for 300 consecutive nights. His subsequent appearance, November 20th, 1871, was at the Lyceum Theatre, in the *Bells*, founded on MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's popular novel of the 'Polish Jew.' He afterwards represented the principal characters in Mr. Wills's dramas of *Charles I.* and *Eugene Aram*, 1873, and 'Richelieu' in Lord Lytton's play. His representation of 'Hamlet' at the Lyceum Theatre (October 31st, 1874) produced a great sensation among the playgoing public, and opinion was at first much divided as to the merits of the performance, but it is now generally admitted that by his rendering of this and of other Shaksperian parts Mr. Irving has placed himself at the head of English tragedians. *Hamlet* was played for 200 nights, the longest run of the play on record. He appeared in *Macbeth*, September 25th, 1875, in *Othello* in 1876, and next as 'Philip' in Lord Tennyson's drama of *Queen Mary*. Afterwards Mr. Irving played his Shaksperian parts in the provinces, in Scotland, and in Ireland. In January, 1877, Mr. Irving added to his Shaksperian repertory by playing *Richard III.* at the Lyceum. In May of the same year he undertook the dual characters of 'Lesurques' and 'Dubosc' in *The Lyons Mail*. On June 8th, 1878, he played the title rôle in *Vanderdecken*, a poetical drama by W. G. Wills. The withdrawal of Mrs.

he has kept there. He might have been excused, as the world goes, if he had 'put on side' and even forgotten some of his friends, but he is just the same kind, generous fellow. He always was careless about money, lavish in his hospitalities—give-you-all-he-had kind of hospitality—whether it was a banquet worthy of a prince, or in his early days a chop and glass of ale. He has not altered one jot, except if it were possible to be a better fellow in his well-deserved prosperity than he was when he would occasionally curtail his courses at dinner in order to buy some little property for some new part, or to procure some book he wanted to read, in the way of his work.

"You see a tragedian has to go deeper into the mysteries of life than a comedian who sticks to his own line ; not that Irving is not a comedian of the first class, as he is a tragedian ; I should think he is, look at his ' Jingle,' his ' Jeremy,' his ' Digby Grant ;' but as I was saying, the tragic muse takes

Bateman from the Lyceum gave Mr. Irving supreme control over the theatre, of which he had long been the mainstay. It opened under his management on December 30th, 1878, when he played the part of 'Hamlet' for 100 nights. The most remarkable incidents of Mr. Irving's management have been the production of *Othello* (in which he alternated the parts of 'The Moor' and 'Iago' with Mr. Edwin Booth), *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Cup*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Faust*, all of which have been played in conjunction with Miss Ellen Terry. A public banquet was given to Mr. Irving at St. James's Hall on July 4th, 1883, shortly before his departure with the Lyceum company for a theatrical tour in the United States. A second visit to America was paid in 1884, and before its close Mr. Irving delivered an address to the students of Harvard University on the art of acting—an event equally remarkable in the annals of the University and of the stage. He gave a similar lecture, by the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor (Mr. Jowett), at the New Examination Schools, Oxford, on June 26th, 1886. In the summer of 1886 Mr. Irving and Miss Terry again paid a visit to America, returning to London in September."—"Men of the Time."

an actor into lines of literary and poetic study from which the low comedian's line of business is entirely free ; Irving was always after queer old books, or bits of costume, or curious daggers and swords ; I suppose each line of business on the stage has its own special advantages, but I have often thought that the tragedian scores as against the low comedian when there is a bad house. For instance, in *Hamlet*, if the melancholy Dane sees there is a bad house it rather helps than injures his acting. The melancholy Dane becomes all the more melancholy when he sees a miserable account of empty boxes, and that is all the better for his acting, his melancholy is all the more natural ; but the low comedian who has to make the audience laugh, it is very hard for him ; he finds no assistance in the bad house ; it lowers his spirits, and he lets off his jokes as if they were damp fireworks, and he knew they would fizzle, and that's just what they do.

"You think I had better get back to my London engagements ? Where was I when I went starrng into the provinces ?—First at the St. James's, then at the Lyceum."

"We might now, I think, pass on to your Adelphi experiences ?"

"Very well ; we will chat all day to-morrow and the rest of the week, if you will promise to go with me to the North—York, Whitby, Harrogate ; it will be a holiday for us both ; after my illness it will be like making my *début*. I feel quite nervous, not having acted for so long, and we can do a lot of 'reminiscencing' in the country. Is it a bargain ?"

"Yes ; and a very pleasant one."

VI.

AT THE ADELPHI.

Engaged by Benjamin Webster—Wright—Toole's first appearance at the Adelphi—Webster a great actor, but not sufficiently appreciated—*The Willow Copse*—"Idiots who would laugh at a funeral"—Queer notions about acting—"Caleb Plummer"—A policeman in difficulties—"Stephen Digges"—Stories of Paul Bedford—Edmund Kean at Bath—Wright and Bedford in Lancashire—The man in the hob-nail pumps—Bob Keeley and Miss Woolgar in *Janet Pride*—Buckstone, Wombwell's show, and Edmund Kean—The magnanimity of "the Roscius of the World"—Leah and the Batemans—"Joe Bright."

I.

"At the close of Dillon's management at the Lyceum, I went on a starring tour in the provinces. One morning I received a letter from Mark Lemon, editor of *Punch* and the author of many plays and innumerable songs (including, by the way, 'Bob Simmons's Courtship'), telling me that Charles Dickens had strongly recommended me to Mr. Benjamin Webster, of the Adelphi, with a view to the management offering me an engagement. I afterwards had a long talk with Lemon, in town, upon the subject, and agreed to join the Adelphi Company as Wright's successor. It was not until I had been warmly advised to do so that I consented; I dreaded the comparisons that might be made between myself, a young actor, and Wright, an established favourite and a very clever comedian. Wright had retired through ill-health, but to my chagrin, not to say alarm, I heard he was coming back just as I had signed my engagement for the line of business that had belonged to him. It was conceded to me, however, that there should be an amicable division of parts. The position troubled me at the time; I admired Wright as an

actor, and was too modest, I hope, to desire to put myself in competition with him so long as he was capable of acting. No strain or friction arose between us or the management, and poor Wright



MR. WRIGHT.

did not remain long. Within a few weeks of his reappearance he was compelled again to withdraw. He went to Boulogne for rest and change, and died there.¹

¹ "Then there was Edward Wright, the king of comedy, farce, and burlesque; 'Jolly Ned,' as Robert Brough used to call him, whose very face was a fortune in itself to a comic actor. Every surviving middle-aged playgoer must remember him with heartfelt gratitude for the many hearty laughs he made every one enjoy who ever had the happy privilege to 'drink him in with eye and ear.' Even with one to succeed him so excelling in every line and shade of the *vis comica* as J. L. Toole, the remembrance of his 'Muster Grinnidge' will always stand out in bold relief. It is really not too much to say that his inimitable performance of the part contributed most materially to clothe the *Green Bushes* with such wondrously enduring verdure. Even as I am penning these lines I see his un-

“He was a curious fellow, Wright, very simple in his habits, and lived outside London, devoting his leisure to farming in a small way. I think it was pigs. One night a countryman was admitted behind the scenes to see him on business. The business was the sale of a pig; it was a celebrated breed, I believe. He discussed the matter with the dealer at the wings. Wright was the seller, and it was not until he was on the stage that he accepted the dealer’s offer. He did it in an aside, while he was speaking his part.

“During the evening he generally took some slight refreshment. On one occasion it was black puddings (the Garrick Club still keeps up its traditional reputation for black puddings), obtained from a celebrated maker. Wright at that time was attended by a new dresser. After the first act (I think the play was *The Poor Strollers*) he handed to the man his frugal but savoury fare, saying, ‘Cut them in half and heat them.’ During his wait in the next act he went to his room to enjoy his repast, but on asking for the puddings the dresser said, ‘I’ve eaten them, as you told me to do.’

“Wright was the original ‘Simmons’ in *The Spitalfields Weaver*, and he did a strange thing in the character when the Queen went to Her Majesty’s Theatre. It was a State visit. Billington played ‘Brown.’ The Royal Beefeaters were

approachable ‘Paul Pry’ rise before me in the mirror of my mental vision, his marvellous ‘Marmaduke Magog,’ ‘Tittlebat Titmouse,’ his ‘Dick Swiveller,’ his ‘Bill Lackaday the Foundling,’ and ever so many more of his humorously grotesque characterizations. I have seen many, many actors in the course of my long career, and a great many of them on the best terms with their audience; but I never, never met with one who could safely venture to take such astonishing liberties with the public as Edward Wright habitually did, and was ever ready and willing to do.”—“Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian.”

on the stage, ranged under the Queen's box. 'Simmons,' you know, in one scene is troubled about where he shall put his hat. Wright looked about here and there, and finally hung it on one of the halberds of the Beefeaters. The face of the man was a study ; so was Wright's, of course. The Beefeater maintained his state just as stolid and firm as if nothing had happened. The Queen laughed heartily ; so did the Prince Consort.

"An incident occurred during the illness of Munyard, second low comedian at the Adelphi, which speaks volumes for Wright's kindly nature. It was the custom of the management to stop an actor's salary if incapacitated from acting through illness or for any other cause. I was ill once, and could not act for three nights, so can speak from experience. Munyard was ill for ten months. Moreover, he was poor, and his salary was of very serious importance to him. Notwithstanding the rule of the theatre, he received his salary every week, and after his long affliction, when he could once more return to his duties, he thanked one of the principals, Madame Celeste, and asked her to express his gratitude to Mr. Webster for generously sending him his salary every week during the whole of his illness. Madame Celeste replied that there must be some mistake, as Mr. Webster never paid salaries during illness, whereupon it was discovered that Wright had sent the money as if it had come in the ordinary way from the management.

"I saw Wright play 'Paul Pry,' but Liston's performance of the original was, of course, long before my time. Wright was very droll, sometimes a trifle coarse, but he had been encouraged in this by his audience, who liked broad fun, and had inherited, perhaps, some of the rough tastes of still older playgoers. It was not that he was

coarse in words so much as in suggestion, and it was the sort of coarseness that was not considered offensive by our grandfathers. He had a rollicking humour, remarkable facial power, and was in perfect sympathy with his Adelphi audience. He gave an individual touch of humour to the most trivial lines and incidents in any part he played, and I have heard old playgoers say he was very much like Liston."

II.

"I MADE my first appearance at the Adelphi in *Good for Nothing*, and an opening sketch by Edmund Yates, in 1858. In January, 1859, I appeared in the burlesque of *Asmodeus*, and in the following May I played 'Spriggins' in *Ici on Parle Français*, under circumstances already explained. My next part of any importance was 'Augustus de Rosherville,' in *The Willow Copse*, a character previously played by Wright. When the piece was over, Webster said 'Come to my room, Toole, I want to see you.' I went. He opened a safe, and produced a small bottle of very choice whisky, of which he took sparingly and helped me to a glass. 'It will do you good,' he said; 'you were capital to-night, my boy—first rate!' Then he checked himself. He was a manager as well as an artist. As the latter he was most appreciative; as the former he had to consider the question of salaries; and I often laughed afterwards at the apparent struggle between his artistic desire to be generous and his managerial policy of economy. However, he was unmistakably pleased with my work, and we got on together exceedingly well. I had a great respect and admiration for him. He was liberal in business, and his instincts were thoroughly artistic. Although his great talent was acknowledged, I

sometimes think he was not sufficiently understood or appreciated. He had a peculiar burr in his speech and a curious habit of jerking out his sentences, but both these mannerisms were effective and characteristic, and he was one of the most earnest and conscientious actors I ever knew. His 'Luke Fielding,' in *The Willow Copse*, was full of his peculiar genius for domestic drama. It had one scene that was pathetic in the extreme. I have cried at it myself, and I never knew him play it without the tears streaming down his cheeks. It is the scene where the supposed dishonour of his daughter is made manifest to him. 'Come with me, we have no longer a place among the honest and the good,' were, I think, the words which take him off from among the neighbours and friends before whom the disgrace of his child has been pronounced.

"In *Janet Pride*, *Masks and Faces*, *One Touch of Nature*, and *The Dead Heart*, I cannot imagine Webster having an equal; it seemed as if the dramatic heroes of those touching plays were imagined, designed, and created for him. Poor fellow, he was dreadfully insulted one night by a remark in the gallery. It was at the time when one of those curious catch-sayings, or street-gags, was in vogue, 'How's your poor feet?'—an idiotic question which *gamins* put to each other without rhyme or reason. 'My heart is dead!' said Webster in the play, and with his usual thrilling emphasis; in the midst of the dead silence a gallery boy called out, 'How's your poor feet?' Webster growled anathemas on the ruffian, not loud but deep, and the audience let the remark pass without either a laugh or a 'hush.' In the excitement of the scene probably but few of them heard it. We were all on, Paul Bedford and myself among the rest—it was the revolutionary scene—the piece

had had a long run, we had nothing to do in the scene, and we could not restrain our laughter, but I need not say we did not indulge our mirth in sight of the audience, nor did we mean Webster to see it, but he did, and went to his room including us in his growls as 'idiots who would laugh at a funeral or grin at a murder, heartless fools;'



MR. BENJAMIN WEBSTER.

but he smiled at the incident himself soon afterwards.

"I remember dining out once with Webster, when we met a somewhat pretentious gentleman, who had queer notions of acting, and expressed one of those outside views which astonished Webster beyond measure. 'The fool!' was all he had the patience to say in the way of comment. The fool had said to Webster, in reference to his great scene in *The Dead Heart*, where he is brought

out of the Bastille, old and ragged, 'Why do you play such a part as that, Mr. Webster?' 'Why?' said Webster; 'I don't understand you.' 'It is all right,' said the fool, 'in the first part, where you are clean and well dressed; but if I were a manager, and could do as I pleased, I should make some of my employés play the ragged and dirty business; I wouldn't be dressed up in rags and tatters.' 'But that is the part, my dear sir,' said Webster. 'I daresay,' replied the fool, 'but it wouldn't be the part for me; if I was the master I'd make others do that sort of thing.' And yet the fool was an architect, and evidently a person of some intelligence; he was in perfect earnest, was rather a showy fellow, and, no doubt, had in his eye the romantic heroes which he would play if he were an actor—cavaliers in satin cloaks, mashers in costume, and so on.²

² On the death of Mr. Webster, July 8th, 1882, a correspondent of the *Observer*, having in his possession an interesting letter written by the famous actor, added to the general information about his birth and parentage the interesting fact that he was a near relative of the celebrated Daniel Webster, and that his grandmother was Miss Buck, a Yorkshire lady, who was cousin to the gallant explorer, Captain Cook. The *Observer*, in its estimate of the artistic merits of Mr. Webster, said:—"As an actor Mr. Webster was full of vigour, genius, and originality; in personations such as those of 'Lavater,' 'Tartuffe,' 'Belphegor,' 'Triplet,' and the hero of *The Dead Heart*, he made a marked impression on the minds of the most thoughtful students of the drama, and proved that as a devoted disciple of his art he laboriously endeavoured to reach perfection in every part he studied. In his hands everything bore the stamp of an earnest conception, and in looking back over his extraordinary *répertoire*, it is impossible not to be struck by the variety of the characters he assumed, and not to admire the steadfastness of purpose with which he gradually worked his way to renown and prosperity. Independently of histrionic work, Mr. Webster displayed his knowledge of the resources of the stage as a dramatic author of no mean capacity. In 1832 he wrote the famous drama of *The Golden Farmer*, and since that time, including adaptations from the French, a hundred pieces have

III.

"*Paper Wings* was produced at the Adelphi in 1860. It was by Watts Phillips. I played 'William Kite.' By permission of Mr. Webster I was cast for 'Enoch Flicker' in the same author's drama called *A Story of '45*. It was done at Drury Lane. It was a part in which one had a chance of combining humour with pathos, and I was complimented by the author on my interpretation of the rôle. On the 1st of March I made my first appearance in a character in the line of 'Enoch Flicker' to this extent, that I was serious, as I had had to be in 'Flicker.' Of course 'Caleb Plummer' was different, but I had not made my mark in purely low comedy parts until I played 'Flicker.' A version of *The Cricket on the Hearth* had been done, but it was not a success, and Boucicault suggested to me a more dramatic and ambitious version of the story, in which I consented to play, fearing at the same time that I was making a new departure that I might perhaps not justify. I read Dickens, and tried at home and while about in the streets to put myself in the position of Caleb. I think I succeeded in getting

been connected with his name. The late manager and actor was proud of his profession and devoted to its best interests. He was a warm supporter and a prominent official of the oldest and best theatrical funds, and he was the founder of the Royal Dramatic College, the intention of which was philanthropic and bold, though its career was not destined to be successful. Mr. Webster was a man of very remarkable physical and mental vigour; until a late day he possessed a vivid memory, and his conversation and reminiscences were the delight of those who listened to him. He enjoyed extraordinary health, and was a keen sportsman and excellent shot, well known some years since in North Wales, where he had a pleasant and picturesque sporting estate. His full name was Benjamin Nottingham Webster, and he was a descendant of the Derbyshire branch of the family."

inside the part. I know I felt for the sufferings of the poor old chap, and did my best to make my audience feel them, and if applause was any criterion that I had satisfied them, I had plenty of



MR. TOOLE AS "CALEB PLUMMER."

it, a very hearty call at the close, and next day the highest commendations of the Press.³

"*The Arca Belle* was first produced in 1864, the authors being William Brough and Andrew

³ "Best of all is the 'Caleb Plummer' of Mr. Toole, which is a piece of really good acting, in which none of the pathos of the part is either sacrificed or caricatured, while every touch of Mr. Dickens's genial humour that still clings to it in the dramatic version is well reproduced. Mr. Toole's 'Caleb Plummer' is an advance upon everything he has yet done above the range of burlesque and farce."—*Examiner*, April 19th, 1862. "Mr. Toole's 'Caleb Plummer' is finished to the highest degree, with a greater depth of humour and pathos than, perhaps, this clever actor ever yet displayed."—*Times*, April 16th, 1862.

Halliday. It became very popular ; so much so that Paul Bedford cautioned Brough and Halliday against the possible vanity of imagining themselves rivals of Beaumont and Fletcher. There are two



MR. PAUL BEDFORD AND MR. TOOLE IN "THE AREA BELLE."

characters in the farce—a soldier and a policeman. Paul Bedford played the soldier, I played the policeman. It was the farce in which I first sung 'A 'Norrible Tale.'⁴ We went to a photographer

⁴ Recently while chatting with Mr. E. L. Blanchard at his chambers in Adelphi Terrace, he referred to "that horrible tale" in order to point the moral of an excellent photograph of himself which was hanging over the mantelpiece. "You see this ring on my finger," he said ; "it was given to me by my dear friend Toole—one of the best fellows in the world. He gave it to me because I would not, as the commercial

who had a place near Mr. Frith's studio at Bayswater. It was a fine summer afternoon. We sent on our costumes first, and dressed for the camera.

"While Paul was being focussed and taken, it occurred to me that I would stroll out into the street. The policemen wore the tall chimney-pot hat in those days. My get-up was perfectly



MR. TOOLE AND THE POLICEMAN.

correct, and I was in the habit of putting on an assumption of that peculiar la-di-da kind of lounge which more or less characterized officers before helmets. I had only walked a very short distance

phrase runs, make a matter of business of it. When the photographer was posing me for that picture he said, 'Have you any particular fancy as to your attitude, Mr. Blanchard?' 'I have not,' I said, 'except that I want you to make a picture of this ring,' and if you will look at the result you will see that I am somewhat ostentatiously showing my ringed hand. I thought to myself, when I am gone, dear Johnny Toole, if he sees my portrait, shall say, 'Well, he did not forget me—that is the ring I gave him.'"

when, turning a corner on the other side of the road, the regular policeman of the beat made his appearance. Somehow or other he seemed to spot me at once. I turned carelessly to take a short cut back, when he at the same time calmly crossed the street after me. I saw a reflection of him in a shop window. I hurried a little ; he hurried a little. I ran ; he ran. Fortunately I succeeded in getting to the photographer's stairs before he came up with me, otherwise I conclude I should have had an unpleasant experience. As it was, it required a thorough explanation before the real policeman consented to leave the premises without me. I daresay the element of jealousy entered into the question a little. Of course, a person of my tall, stalwart build, and in a spotless uniform, would be an apparition calculated to worry the usual occupier of the beat.

“ During the same year I played the title rôle in *Stephen Digges*, a serio-comic piece adapted by John Oxenford from Balzac's novel of ‘*Le Père Goriot*.’⁵ The piece was the special attraction

⁵ “ Mr. J. L. Toole's annual benefit took place last evening, when, in addition to other entertainments, there was produced a new and original drama in two acts from the pen of Mr. John Oxenford, entitled *Stephen Digges*, written, we believe, expressly for Mr. Toole, although, when first projected, it might have been intended for Mr. Robson. Few indeed would have thought of inditing a piece involving not merely serious but tragic incidents for the admirable and highly popular comedian of the Adelphi Theatre ; but after the exhibition of last night no dramatic writer will be slow in entrusting a serio-comic character to Mr. Toole, so decided was his success in the new part. . . . The whole interest of the play centres in ‘*Stephen Digges*,’ if we except the old servant ‘*Betsy*,’ who is an exceedingly well-drawn character. . . . These two characters were inimitably sustained by Mr. Toole and Mrs. Alfred Mellon. As for Mr. Toole, he has made for himself a new fame, and his acting to be thoroughly understood and appreciated must be witnessed.”—*Standard*, September 15th, 1864.

which I put up for my annual benefit. 'Digges' is one of those persons who make you laugh and cry, or should do if properly played. He is funny at first, then sorrowful. You are moved by his sensibility, and his affections, and presently stirred by his passion. The part appeals to an actor who can be both humorous and serious, as in 'Caleb Plummer,' and I enjoyed playing it: but though it was a success, it has somehow quite dropped out of my *répertoire*, as other pieces have, for no particular reason except perhaps that one may have too long a list of plays and characters.

"Between these and other new productions we had many revivals of favourite Adelphi dramas, among them *The Green Bushes*. During Wright's time this well-known play was frequently put up at very sudden notice. It was full of gags, which had originated with Wright and Paul Bedford. There was a pot-boy at an adjacent tavern who used to serve the theatre with its ale and stout, and who had all these gags by heart, and whenever the piece was revived, Wright would send for this boy and rehearse the gags with him. The boy not only remembered the gags, but every bit of business belonging to them."

IV.

"PAUL BEDFORD was a natural comedian, in the sense that he was naturally funny; he talked off the stage very much as he did on, always, and in all characters. He grew to be very fond of me, used to call me father, and generally when he did so prefaced it with a kind of whistle, or with a sudden blowing of the lips. It was the same action as that which always prefaced his 'I believe you, mi bhoy!' He not only saw the great Edmund Kean act, but acted with him on one occasion. It

was at Bath. During Kean's engagement at Drury Lane, the illustrious tragedian took the coach, travelled all night, and arrived at Bath in time for the evening's performance. His secretary, Mr. John Hughes, preceded him to see after the rehearsals. Paul had only just joined the stock company at Bath, his native town, and when he was asked to play the 'Duke of Norfolk' to the eminent one's 'Richard the Third,' Paul was horrified and refused the part, but his manager prevailed upon him to play it, offering to teach it him and to ensure his getting through it all right. 'Well, father,' he said, 'the great man came, and there was I in a grand new dress as the "Duke." It was the Bosworth-field scene where I got into trouble. When I described Richmond's army to Richard as a tattered host of greedy scarecrows, and so poor, so famished, that their executors, the greedy daws, fly hovering over their heads, I did not say daws, father—haw, haw—I said Jack-daws. The house burst into a laugh and so did Richard, and as I went off, my manager was in an awful way, but I did not know what I had done until he told me. At the close of the play Mr. Kean sent for me to his room, and I felt uncommonly ill, father; but I screwed my courage to the sticking-place, went in and at once implored the great man's forgiveness. "Make no apology," said the wondrous actor, "you have made me laugh more heartily than I have laughed for years." And would you believe it, father, he invited me to dinner, and that was the beginning of our friendship.' Paul was very proud of having been introduced to Sir Walter Scott, and it was a great delight to him to tell of Ballantyne, Scott's famous printer, having shown him the lions of Edinburgh.

"He was present at the opening of the first

railway by George Stephenson, when Mr. Huskisson was killed. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Brougham were among the company. Paul, in his serious moments, liked to speak of the fatality, more particularly dwelling upon the fact that political differences had divided Mr. Huskisson and the Duke of Wellington until that very day, when they made up their differences only an hour or two before Huskisson's death. But Paul was not often in a serious mood. He preferred fun to gloom, and one of his best theatrical stories, I think, was his account of an incident of a starring tour he and Wright made with Alexander Lee and Mrs. Waylett. It was a joint-stock affair. They engaged auxiliary talent, among whom were Tom Higgie, little George Wieland, Mr. Gates and his clever daughter Eliza, who danced. Being natives of Lancashire, the latter were very popular. Miss Gates was celebrated for her 'Poetry of Motion Dance,' something in the style of Taglioni.

" 'It was our custom,' said Wright, 'in this speculation, for those who were not required on the stage, to take money and checks at the doors. Higgie and I one night at Bolton were thus engaged at the gallery pay-box; the house was crammed, and we were counting the money, when we paused to listen to the tramp of a pair of very heavy boots on the stairs. Presently a stalwart young fellow appeared with a wonderful pair of hob-nail pumps.'

" 'Show begun?' he asked.

" 'Yes,' I replied.

" 'How much t' see t' show?'

" 'A shilling,' I said.

" 'Oh,' he answered. 'Is there room for a lad loike me?'

" 'I said there was.

“He hesitated a moment, and then said, ‘I say, my coveys, does Miss Gates dance Poatry ta Motion ta neight?’

“I had to ask Higgie, who understood Lancashire, what the distinguished foreigner was talking about.

“He explained that the young man desired to know if Miss Gates danced the Poetry of Motion to-night.

“‘No,’ I said; ‘she does not.’



MRS. ALFRED MELLON (MISS WOOLGAR).

“‘Then gie mi my money back,’ he said.

“Not willing to return money, as a matter of principle, and desirous of pushing business, I explained that the company was a first-class London company, which included the celebrated Mr. Wright and Paul Bedford.

“‘Oh, they be dashed,’ was his prompt reply; ‘gie mi my money back. If lass does na do ta Poatry ta Motion, I wouldna gie a button for t’other stuff.’

“‘I returned him his shilling, and as he pocketed it, and was about to descend the gallery stairs, he

looked at us with a scornful laugh, and remarked, "Ah say, my swells, ta cove at cabin willna get much a' that blunt after yo two kids have riddled t'gridiron."

"This reflection upon our honesty as well as our art was rather irritating; but he had such wonderfully big hob-nailed boots!"

"Among the Adelphi revivals was *Janet Pride*. I followed my old friend Bob Keeley in the part of the clockmaker's boy. I had seen Keeley play the part, and I used to admire him in the scene where he had to say good-bye to Miss Woolgar,⁶

⁶ "Mrs. Alfred Mellon (*née* Sarah Jane Woolgar) was born in 1824. She made her professional *début* in London in September, 1843, at the old Adelphi Theatre, in a duologue entitled *Antony and Cleopatra*. At the beginning of her career Miss Woolgar's versatile talents were generally employed in burlesque, in which she attained great repute. Her name will, however, be more generally and favourably known in connection with the series of domestic dramas for which the old Adelphi, under Mr. Benjamin Webster's management, and during Madame Celeste's popularity, became famous. Among the more important of those in which Miss Woolgar played on the occasion of their first performance may be mentioned *The Flowers of the Forest* ('Lemuel'); *The Marble Heart* ('Marie'); *The Willow Copse* ('Meg'); *Généviève: or, the Reign of Terror* (the title rôle in succession to Madame Celeste); *The Dead Heart* ('Catherine Duval'), &c."

In her later years Miss Woolgar continued to act, and with success, in an endless variety of characters. "Monday, August 8th, 1864, in a new farce of some interest by T. J. Williams, entitled *My Wife's Maid*, Miss Woolgar played the leading character, 'Barbara Perkins.' In July, 1865, still at the Adelphi, first performance of Mr. Walter Gordon's play, *Through Fire and Water*, she performed the part of 'Honor Bright.' Saturday, May 5th, 1866, first performance at the same theatre of Mr. Benjamin Webster junior's version of Victorien Sardou's 'La Famille Benoiton,' entitled *The Fast Family*, Miss Woolgar sustained the part of 'Clotilde.' In the following year, Thursday, December 26th, first appearance at the Adelphi of *No Thoroughfare* (Messrs. Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins), Mr. Charles Fechter in the leading rôle, Miss Woolgar played 'Sally Goldstraw.' After this date Miss

before she was to be removed on board the convict ship. He was the comic lover of the piece, you know—the clockmaker's boy ; but Keeley moved the house tremendously in that parting scene. He had to try and cheer Miss Woolgar, who was wrongfully sentenced, telling her that he had got the captain to let him go as a cabin-boy (one of those impossible things that are allowable on the stage), and therefore they would be on the same ship. The little chap's grief and self-denial were so real, his always serious face so serious, that the audience forgot him as the low comedian ; and when the officer of the gaol laid a kindly hand upon his shoulder, and told him it was time for him to leave, the look of utter sadness and sorrow in Keeley's face, and his dejected, but firm and resigned exit, were tender and touching beyond description." ⁷

Woolgar (Mrs. Alfred Mellon) seldom appeared on the London boards until 1872. From 1872 to 1875 she acted at various theatres in several revivals of plays of more or less interest. In March, 1875, first performance at the Adelphi of a dramatic version of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' from the pen of the late Mr. Andrew Halliday, she undertook the part of 'Mrs. Squeers.' The same year, in October, reappearance of Mr. Joseph Jefferson at the Princess's Theatre as 'Rip Van Winkle,' she played 'Gretchen ;' and in 1877, at the same theatre, she performed her original character in *Lost in London*, produced at the Adelphi Theatre in 1877. On Wednesday, May 15th, 1878, a performance was given at Drury Lane Theatre in aid of a testimonial benefit to Mrs. Alfred Mellon (Miss Woolgar), in which the principal members of the dramatic profession took part. The result was in every sense most gratifying, and bore ample testimony to her personal worth and considerable merits as an actress. A sum of 1000*l.* was collected.

"Miss Woolgar married the late Alfred Mellon, a gentleman at one time well known in the musical world, and a composer of considerable ability, who inaugurated the series of Promenade Concerts now annually given at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden."—"Pascoe's Dramatic List."

⁷ The following appreciative biography of Robert Keeley appeared in the *Times* of February 3rd, 1869 :—"Another link

In 1862 a little book of the "Recollections and Wanderings of Paul Bedford" was published. I

in the chain of old dramatic associations has been broken by the decease of that eminent comedian, Mr. Robert Keeley, who expired on Wednesday evening at his residence, Pelham Crescent, Brompton. Mr. Keeley had attained his seventy-fifth year. Few actors have more largely contributed to the amusement of the public; and the thoroughly original style and the peculiar richness of the humour of this excellent performer will be vividly remembered by all playgoers who can date their experiences from some thirty or forty years ago. In private life no actor was more heartily welcomed or more highly esteemed.

"Mr. Robert Keeley was born in the year 1798 at No. 8, Grange Court, Carey Street, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, being one of a family of sixteen brothers and sisters. At an early age he was apprenticed to Mr. Hansard, the then celebrated printer; but in the fourth year of his apprenticeship his predilection for the stage induced him to apply to Mr. Sims, the theatrical agent, and he made an appearance at Richmond, in Surrey, where so many novices have first tested their abilities. This was in the summer of 1813. . . . Hence he entered the Norwich circuit, then under the management of Mr. John Brunton, where he became a great favourite. In 1817 he came to London and joined Mr. Beverley at the West London, now the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where for two seasons he divided the low comedy with the late Harry Beverly. A visit to Birmingham followed; and thence he came to the Olympic, of which Elliston was lessee, and in 1818 made his metropolitan hit as 'Leporello' in *Giovanni in London*, his brother, since dead, playing the part of 'Simpkin.' Accompanying Elliston to Drury Lane in the following year, Mr. Robert Keeley again had the opportunity of showing his humour in this part—though cast for an inferior one—in consequence of Mr. Edward Knight, who was the substitute for Harley, being taken ill, and from that time he dated his real introduction to public notice. Seceding from Drury Lane in 1821, he joined the Adelphi company, where he appeared in a small part called 'Dash,' without attracting, however, much attention. On November 26th of this year, Moncrieff's version of Pierce Egan's *Tom and Jerry* was produced, and Mr. Keeley's acting as 'Jemmy Green' became a great feature in the extravaganza, which ran through two seasons. At the end of the first season Mr. Keeley with Walbourne, so renowned as 'Dusty Bob,' went to Sadler's Wells, and on April 8th, 1822, appeared there as 'Jerry,' in Pierce Egan's own adaptation of the book. The

find in it a passing reference to the clockmaker's boy, and an anecdote which it will be interesting to quote in this place, the more so that it contains a tribute to the author's associate at the Adelphi, which it is pleasant to read:—

“When my late friend and associate, Wright, departed, I despaired of ever again meeting one

reputation he thus gained procured for him an engagement at Covent Garden, where he made his first appearance October 26th, 1822, as ‘Darby,’ in *The Poor Soldier*. When the Covent Garden season terminated he was engaged by Mr. Arnold for the English Opera House, appearing as ‘Fritz’ in R. B. Peake’s dramatic romance of *Frankenstein*. In the autumn of 1824, Covent Garden again had his services, and when (October 14th) Weber’s *Der Freischütz* was produced, he was the ‘Killian;’ and at this theatre he remained several successive seasons, hence obtaining the clever partner of his life in Miss Goward, who was included in the same company. After having acquired a great reputation, the popularity of these performers brought offers from the American managers, and in 1837 they paid a flying visit to the States, of which Mr. Keeley afterwards recorded his impressions in an amusing volume. Returning to England, he joined Madame Vestris at the Olympic in 1838, and accompanied her to Covent Garden afterwards, when that theatre passed under her management. In 1842 the Keeleys were at the Strand, and the following year were engaged at the Princess’s, opening with *Twelfth Night*. In 1844 (April 8th), Mr. Keeley, in conjunction with Mr. Strutt, opened the Lyceum, and for three seasons maintained its popularity with decided benefit to their purse and the public. In October, 1850, Mr. Keeley undertook, with Mr. Charles Kean, the management of the Princess’s, opening with *Twelfth Night*, but the theatre was soon left under the exclusive direction of Mr. Charles Kean. Mr. and Mrs. Keeley then fulfilled an engagement at the Adelphi, and afterwards appeared under the management of Mr. E. T. Smith at Drury Lane. Here Mr. Keeley, in March, 1856, made his last appearance on the stage. Besides his widow, whose histrionic reputation has been equal to that of her late husband, Mr. Robert Keeley has left behind him two daughters to lament his loss. Miss Mary Keeley, it will be remembered, became Mrs. Albert Smith, and Miss Louise Keeley married Mr. Montague Williams, the well-known barrister.

with whom I could so congenially co-operate for the amusement of the public, but I have been most agreeably delighted and surprised by the co-partnery and talent of one of the most versatile and agreeable demonstrators of the comic muse in this or any other country—I allude to J. L. Toole, whose public celebrity is world-renowned, but whose real worth and goodness can only be appreciated by those who have the pleasure of his private society and friendship. This miniature of goodness is ever ready to lend a helping hand to the needy of our craft. For example, on one night last season he played at three separate theatres; first at the Surrey, secondly at the Adelphi, and thirdly at Sadler's Wells. A comic incident occurred in the transit from the Adelphi to Sadler's Wells. He (Toole) played the 'Clockmaker's Boy' in *Janet Pride*, at the Adelphi, having to finish at Sadler's Wells as 'Old Grinnage' in *The Green Bushes*. Being pressed for time, he changed garments in the cab. Arrived at the theatre, cabby was astonished to see the old man turn out, and said, 'What have you done with the boy? This old gent didn't get in at the Adelphi, what have you done with the young 'un? I ain't easy in my mind about that there lad.' We laughed and told the Jarvey it was all right."

V.

"PAUL BEDFORD used to relate an interesting incident in the early career of the late J. B. Buckstone. He was engaged when quite a boy for utility business at Hastings. Wombwell's show proved an overwhelming counter-attraction to the theatre. Affairs were desperate, when the manager called the company together, discussed the situation, and agreed with him that a strong

new play which he had just obtained, and which was a great hit at the Surrey, might retrieve their fortunes. In this piece the boy Buckstone was cast for an unimportant part; but he went out upon the Downs to study it. A gentleman who was loitering in the locality followed him during the third day of his work and eventually addressed him.



MR J. B. BUCKSTONE.

“ ‘You appear to be deeply interested in your book, my young friend; what may it be?’ ”

“ The question was asked in a gracious and courteous manner, and Buckstone promptly handed the book to the stranger.

“ ‘Oh, indeed,’ said he, ‘the new drama they are playing in London! You have evidently a taste for dramatic literature.’ ”

“‘I am a member of the company of actors now playing at Hastings,’ Buckstone replied.

“‘Indeed,’ said the stranger, ‘I am fond of dramatic works, especially those of Shakspeare.’

“‘Ah!’ said the boy, ‘William Shakspeare is not a gentleman of my acquaintance yet, but I hope to be on speaking terms with him some day.’

“‘I hope you may be,’ said the stranger. ‘And how are you doing at the theatre? I trust business is good?’

“‘No, sir; I am sorry to say it is very bad. There is a wild-beast show in the town, which has emptied the theatre. The truth is, the management is hard up; if the new piece does not draw, I am afraid we shall all be ruined; a friend of mine, Cooper the scene-painter, had saved a five-pound note for a rainy day, kept it in his watch-case, watch was stolen last night, and affairs are not at all rosy with any of us. But the benefit season is beginning, and that will help us through perhaps.’

“The stranger said he would like to see the theatre, wondered if the boy could show him over the house, felt an interest in players, and so on. The boy piloted him to the theatre, with an eye to patronage for his own benefit. When the stranger had seen the house, and gathered more information about the poor condition of the treasury and the worthy character of the management, he thanked the boy for his courtesy and attention, and was about to take his leave. At that moment a post-chaise drove up to the doors of the theatre, and none other than Mr. Elliston, then manager of Drury Lane, jumped out and effusively took the hand of the stranger, saying, ‘My dear friend, I have been looking everywhere for you; you must return to town at once; in your absence business has been ruinous; must announce you for “Richard” on Monday.’

“‘I came here with your consent to study my part in the new tragedy,’ said the stranger.

“‘We must put that off,’ said Mr. Robert William Elliston.

“‘On one condition,’ said the other.

“‘Name it,’ said Elliston.

“‘That you will remain here and play with me to-morrow night for the benefit of our unfortunate brethren.’

“‘Agreed,’ said Elliston.

“That night it was announced that on the following evening the pieces would be *The Merchant of Venice*—‘Shylock’ by Edmund Kean (‘the Roscius of the world,’ as Paul called him) and *The Liar*—‘Wildrake,’ R. W. Elliston. The result was a house that enabled the management to pay all back salaries, to buy Cooper a new watch and note, and money enough to take the troupe comfortably to the next town of Dover.

“‘There!’ Paul would invariably add, as he has done in his little book; ‘there, dear boy, was a pattern for our smaller tragedians to emulate.’”

VI.

“IN January, 1865, Miss Bateman appeared at the Adelphi in *The Hunchback*.

“There was some rivalry of opinion on the part of the audience as to the merits of the two ladies in the piece, Miss Henrietta Sims and the star. Mr. H. L. Bateman, you may be sure, was a tremendous partisan on his daughter’s side. The truth is, both actresses were very good. Miss Sims had a more dainty and cultivated art than Miss Bateman. The latter had made a hit as ‘Leah’ in an English adaptation of the German play. She had thrilled great audiences with the powerful way in which she cursed the hero of the piece, and had otherwise given a fine impersona-

tion of the persecuted maiden. She was one of 'the Bateman children' whom her father had made famous.⁸ Bateman was a great believer in



MISS KATE BATEMAN.

Bateman and the Batemans, and had first-rate qualities. He was very intense in his likes and

⁸ "Kate Josephine Bateman was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in October, 1842. Both her parents were actors, and she, with her sister, two years younger than herself, appeared in public as the 'Bateman Children' as early as 1851, at the St. James's Theatre. She afterwards prepared herself assiduously for the stage, and in 1859 played successfully in the leading American theatres, her principal characters being those of 'Evangeline,' founded on Longfellow's poem; 'Geraldine,' in a play written for her by her mother; 'Julia,' in *The Hunchback*; 'Pauline,' in *The Lady of Lyons*; and 'Juliet' and 'Lady Macbeth.' She arrived in England in the autumn of 1863, and appeared 210 times in the character of the Jewish maiden 'Leah,' in an adaptation of the German play,

dislikes, a good friend, a bitter enemy. I played 'Fathom' in this revival of *The Hunchback*. In the summer of the same year, *Through Fire and Water*, by Walter Gordon, was produced, in which I played the character of 'Joe Bright.'⁹

Deborah, at the Adelphi Theatre, October 1st. After a provincial tour, she reappeared at the Adelphi, playing 'Julia' in the *Hunchback*, and other characters. She took a farewell of the English public at Her Majesty's Theatre, in the character of 'Juliet' in *Romeo and Juliet*, December 22nd, 1865, and was married to Mr. George Crowe in October, 1866. Mrs. Crowe returned to the stage in 1868, retaining her stage name of Kate Bateman. In 1868 Miss Bateman played the part of 'Mary Warner,' in the play of that name written for her by the late Tom Taylor, at the Haymarket Theatre, supported by Messrs. Howe, Kendal, Compton, Rogers, &c. She has made the character of 'Leah' peculiarly her own. In 1872, and subsequently, she appeared with great success in London as 'Medea,' in the play of that name. In 1875, on a revival of *Macbeth* at the Lyceum (Mr. Irving as 'Macbeth'), she played the part of 'Lady Macbeth.' She also sustained the title rôle in Mr. Tennyson's *Queen Mary*, which was produced at the same house in April, 1876. Miss Bateman appeared on the first night of the reopening of Sadler's Wells under the management of Mrs. Bateman, in *Rob Roy*, as 'Helen MacGregor,' and spoke the opening address on that occasion, written by the late Tom Taylor. Miss Bateman subsequently produced at Sadler's Wells the play of *His Wife*, by Henry Arthur Jones, in which she played her original part of 'Margaret Field.'—"Men of the Time."

⁹ "Although the majority of characters to which Mr. J. L. Toole devotes his talents belong to the region of broad farce, and for the most part only derive their reality from the special ability of the actor to delineate individual peculiarity, he generally strikes into another line whenever he would make an impression of more than ordinary strength, as if convinced that his proper vocation was to follow the late Mr. F. R. Robson in semi-pathetic illustrations of plebeian life. . . . The action takes place in a stratum of society which is respectable, though humble, the groupings are simple, and the personages are all more or less of marked character, and are all more or less important, the principal figure in whom the interest of the piece culminates being more strongly marked than the rest, and so conceived as to command by turns the laughter and compassion of the audience, and to exhibit the most violently

It is a part of the serio-comic order—a fireman, an honest, worthy, humble chap—and there is in it a good opportunity for acting; when distressed in his mind the poor fellow takes some spirits and becomes savagely drunk. A good fellow sober, Joe becomes a demon drunk. The audience, I remember, were very enthusiastic at this point of the play, and the critics next morning had very favourable notices of the actor. In May, 1866, I played ‘Prudent’ in *The Fast Family*, adapted from Sardou’s *La Famille Benoiton*, and I think that ends what may be called my record of the Adelphi, so far as original pieces go. Of course I played many other parts, and for the first time, in revivals of Adelphi drama. But without going into tedious details, we have covered the ground;

contrasted emotions. This figure ‘Joe Bright,’ a fireman, is who is of course represented by Mr. J. L. Toole. He is a thoroughly honest fellow, who achieves infinite honour, and wins innumerable medals by a gallant discharge of his perilous duties, and is, withal, so modest, that he cannot bear to hear himself even slightly praised. . . . All the parts are good and all are well acted. That Mr. J. L. Toole, as ‘Joe Bright,’ would represent to perfection the honest plebeian, good at heart, and thick of head, might easily be foreseen; but there is novelty in the drunken outburst that brings the first act to a close. Droll inebriety is common enough upon the stage, and Mr. B. Webster in *Janet Pride* gives an admirable picture of the habitual drunkenness by which a man endeavours to silence the voice of an evil conscience. But the effects of ardent spirits imbibed by a man who is already distressed in mind, and is suddenly converted from a comparatively rational being into an ungovernable savage, ready to commit any deed of violence, has been seldom if ever represented, and Mr. Toole has never more forcibly displayed his faculty for profitable observation than in his terrific exhibition of this peculiar phase of human frailty. ‘Honour Bright,’ Joe’s hard-headed, good-hearted, and somewhat grimly coquettish sister, not highly educated, but deeply convinced of the superiority of mind to brute force, is a capitally-drawn character, capitally played by Mrs. Mellon, to whom Miss H. Sims, as the more gentle ‘Ruth,’ is an agreeable contrast.”—*Times*, July 8th, 1868.

and the next landmark in my career is at the Queen's with *Dearer than Life*, in 1866."

"Before we emigrate to the Queen's," I said, "we will glance back again at your personal and anecdotal reminiscences of the Adelphi."

"Yes, and we will begin with—"

"A new chapter," I said.

VII.

BEHIND THE SCENES AND BETWEEN THE ACTS.

The humours of Bob Romer—Jimmy Rogers discovers the recluse—The disabilities of shopkeeping—Bob and the blackbird—T. P. Cook—"The Caged Lion"—Two views of Brighton—Buckstone and the bill-sticker—Toole as an imitator—Keeley at Bow Street—Reading a play—Gommersal and the nuts—Actors and authors—Old G—— discomfited—A dramatic college *fête*—Toole and the conjuror—An amusing reminiscence of Leamington.

I.

"BOB ROMER was a minor member of the Adelphi company. His name is not known much outside theatrical society; but he was a droll fellow. He had many peculiarities. Being poor is perhaps hardly a peculiarity; but with Romer's poverty there was the pride that apes humility, and at the same time the frankness and *bonhomie* of an out-and-out Bohemian who was not ashamed of confessing to the shifts he had been put to in making both ends meet. He hardly believed himself that he was a good actor; but he was unconsciously humorous both off the stage and on, always cheery, and with a full appreciation of gifts in others which he did not possess himself. He

had a peculiar mannerism both on and off the stage. He spoke in a gurgling kind of way, with jerks and pauses, like pouring liquor from a bottle. He had a professional air of somewhat seedy gentility—nothing of the crushed tragedian about him, and yet he had not exactly the appearance of the light and gay comedian. When I was a boy and loved theatres above everything, I knew Bob Romer by sight, had had him pointed out to me, and I remember watching him while he looked into a Strand shop-window and when he walked away, saying, by way of a private salutation as it were, ‘Bob Romer.’ He was one of those innocent kind of fellows who do not know when they are being chaffed, or if they are conscious of it, are willing to share in the fun themselves. Bob once played ‘Othello’ for a benefit, and in his famous address to the Senate a number of his friends had a box and made curious rejoinders to his confessions, such, for instance, as when he said,—

“ ‘That I have ta’en away this old man’s daughter
It is most true,’

they remarked ‘Oh, Bob!’ and when he added—

“ ‘True I have married her,’

they exclaimed cheerfully, ‘Ah well! that’s all right, Bob.’ At the line—

“ ‘Rude am I in speech,’

they said, “No, Bob, not at all; you do yourself an injustice,” and so on; and the memorable performance being over, Bob was as merry as the rest at the supper which celebrated it.

“He would never tell anybody where he lived, ‘because,’ he said in his flowery and dramatic way, ‘I do not like people to think me otherwise than of noble birth, and I would prefer them to

imagine me in aristocratic quarters—in Grosvenor Square say, rather than the purlieus of Islington.' At last, James Rogers, familiarly known as 'Jimmy,' found him out; I forget at the moment where, but the street was gloomy and unpretentious. Looking down an area, Jimmy espied Mr. Robert Romer, in an apron, near an area window, cleaning knives on a knifeboard. Rogers knocked at the door; was admitted; discovered his friend,



MR. JAMES ("JIMMY") ROGERS.

and exclaimed, 'At last, Master Bob, I have found you out!' Romer took it in very good part, struck a melodramatic attitude, knife in one hand, board in the other, and exclaimed, 'Ah—this pang at least—might have been—spared me!' There was some handy refreshment in a cupboard, and the two friends celebrated the occasion with characteristic geniality. Romer, I believe, swore Rogers to eternal secrecy upon the carving-knife he had just cleaned; and Rogers as promptly told

us the story at the theatre the next evening, no one joining more heartily in the merriment it inspired than Bob Romer himself.

“He was not always engaged at the theatre. He had vacations—not in the country, but on his own resources in town. I met him one day during one of these intervals between wealth and poverty. I asked after his health and his worldly prospects. ‘Oh, dear boy,’ he said, ‘I’m always unlucky—born to it, I suppose—opened a sweet-stuff shop, up a court not far from the Strand—result most disastrous—the flies had the best of it—only one customer during the short time I stuck to it—a confiding youth who wanted to buy a farthing cane. I didn’t keep farthing canes—had to refer him to a rival tradesman—enough to break a fellow’s heart. But such is life, dear boy—such is life!’¹

“Bob kept a blackbird in his dressing-room at the theatre, and was in the habit of feeding it with little tit-bits of meat from the butcher’s. He would begin early in the week with six pennyworth; then it would get down to threepence, and occasionally, when he was rather hard up, he would share these tit-bits with the blackbird, cooking them himself on his little fire. He was not extravagant, and his salary was not princely. Occasionally he would be rather short at the end of the week. The butcher was a great admirer of his. Bob had a genial, pleasant way with him, and had many

¹ Mr. William Tinsley, a friend of the late Bob Romer, writes to say that one of the incidents of the sweet-stuff shop was used by Brough and Halliday in a farce in which Bob was an actor. Bob sold penny kites as well as sweets. The kites were hung from the ceiling at the back of the shop. Bob had to get up a ladder to them. Boys came in to buy penny kites, and while he was up the ladder they plundered his sweets. This incident was adapted in an Adelphi farce and was very funnily treated.

humble friends. 'One pennyworth of tit-bits,' said Bob to the messenger at the end of the week ; 'only one pennyworth—for the blackbird.' It was



MRS. BANCROFT.

always 'for the blackbird.' It saved his pride, poor old chap, and he had a certain amount of that commodity. The butchers used to call these bits of meat 'block ornaments ;' they were in the habit of selling them, after the day's business was over, to poor people. These little incidents of Bob's pride and eccentricity used frequently to come under my notice. I always thought there was something rather pathetic in his dealings with the butcher and the blackbird.²

² Mrs. Bancroft, in her share of the double narrative of "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage," tells the following

Warned by the *Daily News* that no reminiscences of Mr. Toole will be complete unless full justice is done to Mr. Robert Romer, concerning

capital story of Bob Romer :—" I remember an amusing scene occurring one morning as I arrived at the stage-door to attend a rehearsal, when I heard Bob questioning the hall-porter with a mysterious and puzzled expression on his face. First of all I must explain that on the previous day a little dinner had been given to him by a few friends in the company who desired to have a good joke at poor Bob's expense, and to have one or two speeches about his untried talents, and to sympathize with his failure in ever getting a good part. The poor fellow rose to reply, and after a lengthy speech, which I believe caused much suppressed but undetected laughter, he ended by saying, 'A—I feel much touched by—your—a—sympathy; and with regard to my—a—hidden ability—a—light under a bushel—I may say—if I am not important, I am at least—a—pleasing.'

"This miniature banquet was kept up until ten o'clock, for Bob had not to appear on the stage before eleven, just to act one of his celebrated 'next-to-nothing' parts. He had partaken rather freely of the wine and was somewhat unsteady. When he awoke on the following morning, he had a vague recollection of the dinner; but, for the life of him, could not remember anything that happened afterwards, and his anxiety to find out how things went off at the theatre was very great. When I arrived at the stage-door, a conversation to this effect was going on between Bob and the hall-porter :—

"BOB : 'A—good house—last night, Richardson?'

"PORTER : 'Yes, sir, very good house.'

"BOB : 'A—nothing—went wrong at all?'

"PORTER : 'Nothing, sir.'

"BOB : 'A—how did the farce go?'

"PORTER : 'Not so well as usual, I was told, sir.'

"BOB (quickly) : 'Not so well, how's that?'

"PORTER : 'I did hear, sir, that it were 'issed.'

"BOB : 'Bless my soul! Was Mr.—a—Webster in the theatre?'

"PORTER : 'He had gone 'ome, sir.'

"BOB (breathing more easily) : 'Is he here this morning?'

"PORTER : 'Yes, sir, just arrived.'

"BOB : 'A—did he—ask for me?'

"PORTER : 'No, sir.'

"BOB (after cautiously looking round) : 'About last night—a—was I here?'"

whom many of the anecdotes extant are among Mr. Toole's stock stories, I venture to annex part of a chapter of the "Reminiscences of an Old Bohemian," an anonymous volume, but the work of Dr. Strauss, one of the early members of the Savage Club. "Bob Romer," says the learned doctor, "was a devoted student of some of the more abstruse sciences. I met him one day skipping along in rather juvenile fashion, 'Hallo, Bob!' I cried to him; 'what's the matter with you, my young friend? Why, you trip it as lightly and nimbly as Mercury.' Bob stopped short, gave me a look of unfathomable meaning, then said, slowly and impressively: 'Mercury! hem! water boils at the poles there—where here, on our earth, it freezes. Singular! isn't it?' And, with another deep look, he left me to ponder upon the curious problem of such a most remarkable difference between these two distinguished members of the solar system.

"On another occasion Halliday and myself happened to stumble upon Bob when he was most attentively watching the working of a chocolate-making machine in Holborn. When he became aware of our presence, he slowly turned to us, and, pointing his finger to the revolving crusher, exclaimed in a portentous voice, the single word, 'centrifugal,' then went on his way, apparently lost, like Chrononhotonthologos, in a 'cogibundity of cogitation.'

"I met Bob one day in Maiden Lane. It was after the death of Miss Romer, who had left him in her will, if not exactly a thumping legacy, perhaps, still something comparatively handsome. The lucky legatee had just received a letter from France, which he asked me to translate for him. It was from a theatrical biographist, asking for particulars of the deceased artist's career, as he

intended to bring out a sketch of her life in his publication. Mr. Robert Romer was enchanted. He disparagingly compared the brief lukewarm obituaries that had appeared in some English papers with what this French gentleman professed himself willing, nay, eager to do. There was a rider to the letter, intimating that it was always customary for the surviving relatives of any subject of a biographic sketch to subscribe five hundred copies for private circulation among friends, &c., and requesting that the sum of two hundred and fifty francs (10*l.* English money) should be forwarded to the office of the publication, together with particulars of life, &c.

"I slyly glanced at Bob whilst reading this out to him, and I saw how his face changed; for a mild man, as he unquestionably was, he looked absolutely fierce.

"'Cursed French idiot!—swindler!' he cried in angry tones; 'does he take me for a fool? Don't want his trash. Knows nothing of late Miss Romer, I'll be bound. Trade upon the dead! dirty! Ten pounds, indeed! Not a blessed farthing!' And snatching the letter from my hand, he furiously tore it into bits, and danced upon the pieces, to the intense amazement of George Honey, who was casually passing by, but had to stop to listen to the indignant Adelphian's fierce objurgations and charges against the unlucky Frenchman, who had conceived the atrocious design of getting money out of him."

II.

"I CALLED with Paul Bedford on T. P. Cooke at Torrington Square. It was after Cooke had retired from the stage. Paul wanted him to play for his benefit. He made the proposition rather

gingerly, after a little prologue, in which he made himself as agreeable as possible to Mrs. Cooke.

“ ‘Well, well, my dear Tippy’—we always called Cooke ‘Tippy’—‘will you play for my benefit?’

“ ‘Pray, don’t ask him,’ said Mrs. Cooke.

“ ‘I was to have played at the Lyceum,’ said Tippy, ‘and taken a farewell, but they cast me for a Greenwich pensioner.³ I couldn’t play it, you know. *It was an old man.*’

“ ‘Of course not,’ said Mrs. Cooke; ‘he couldn’t play an old man; it is not in his line.’

“ ‘When we were leaving the house I said to Bedford, ‘That was rather funny, Paul—couldn’t play an old man.’

“ ‘Not a bit, father,’ said Paul, ‘of course he couldn’t; you might as well ask *me* to play old men.’

“ ‘Very amusing. Paul was no chicken; and Cooke—well, Cooke *was* an old man.

“ ‘Cooke was a remarkable actor; he had no equal in *The Pilot*, and he was the original ‘William’ in *Black-eyed Susan*. As a pantomimist, his agile and grotesque powers were seen to great advantage when he played ‘The Monster’ in *Frankenstein*. He had a curious tremor in his voice, and one night, when, as ‘William,’ he was speaking of the ‘Lord High Admiral,’ somebody called out, ‘Don’t cry, Mr. Cooke,’ to which he responded, ‘*I’m not crying, my lad.*’”

III.

“ TOM STEWART was a famous old actor, and well-known at the Adelphi. We used to call him the caged lion, he considered himself so cramped by

³ In a new piece, written by Craven, with a view to Cooke, and called *One Tree Hill*.

ordinary melodrama; he always wanted to let out, had no opportunities for his genius, such as he had been accustomed to in the provinces, where he had played 'Richard,' 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' and the heroes of tragedy generally. He was a pompous, but kindly fellow, gloomily serious; and Paul and I, who were mostly occupied in cheerier walks of life, real and assumed, could not resist opportunities of playing off little practical jokes upon him. He often boasted of his triumphs at Bath and other leading provincial theatres, and of his distinguished country friends.

"One day, amongst my cards, I found one belonging to a gentleman I did not know, Captain H. Smedley. I wrote on the back, in an assumed hand:—'Dear Tom,—Come and lunch with me to-morrow at two o'clock, for auld lang syne.' In the evening Tom said, 'Now, here's an absurd thing; here's some old friend of mine, Captain H. Smedley, called upon me, left his card, invited me to lunch, and gives me no address: very extraordinary!' We both said it was; but suggested that he would probably hear from him again.

"In the evening, sure enough, came a note—'In haste.—Dear Tom,—Sorry you didn't come. Will you make it dinner at eight?' Tom, again in a fume, said, 'These country fellows are so thoughtless. I have no doubt this is some dear old friend of mine from Bath; and yet, here's an absurd thing, invites me to dine at eight, the very time I am on the stage.'

"We asked him a good many questions about his Bath friends. He said he didn't quite remember Smedley, but he had so many friends, particularly military officers, that he might be excused for forgetting their names.

"The next day we sent him a note, in which

Captain Smedley apologized for not remembering how difficult it would be for him to dine at eight, but telling him he would be in a box that night with some ladies, and would come round afterwards, if he might, and take him to Long's, and they would have some supper and a good chat.

"That night, to our great amazement, we noticed that Tom Stewart had picked out a box where there was a gentleman and two ladies, and to which box he played with great assiduity, kissing his hand at the wing as the curtain went down. We were glad that this conduct was not resented by the gentleman on behalf of his lady companions. Nobody came round to see Mr. Stewart; we had almost expected the stranger to do so—in America he would have waltzed round with a six-shooter, as our cousins would put it. Stewart waited a little time: we waited with him; and finally took him home ourselves to supper.

"The matter always remained a mystery with him, as did many other similar little jokes that were very amusing to us; more particularly when we drew him out upon them, and induced him to boast a little, as we did one evening in a miscellaneous little company in regard to a presentation made to him at Bath. Having got him to describe the value of it, Paul Bedford, with his preliminary whistle, which I daresay you will remember, said, 'And you sent it to your uncle, Tom, the next day?'

"'I did nothing of the kind, sir,' said Tom, with much offended dignity, 'and I will no longer waste my time in a company which I had mistaken for a company of gentlemen.'

"Stewart was a friend of Mr. Edwin James when that remarkable person was Recorder of

Brighton. James tried to get Stewart the appointment of Inspector of Weights and Measures there. While the Recorder's efforts were active Stewart was continually running down to Brighton. 'The healthiest place in England,' he would say, 'sea always there, no dreary low-water business, a bright genial city by the ocean, sir!' When the Inspectorship was decided against his candidature, he dropped Brighton, wouldn't even speak of it for months, but one day, asked if he were going down to Brighton for a holiday, he let out—'Brighton, no, sir; no place for a Christian man—treeless land—shingly shore—shipless sea!'"

V.

"ONE night, Fechter, Sothern, myself and Buckstone, were leaving the Haymarket Theatre some little time after the performance was over, when suddenly Buckstone discovered a bill-sticker posting an election-placard right upon the front of that sacred house of comedy.

" 'How dare you, sir!' he said in his peculiar guttural and jerky manner, 'how dare you post bills upon my theatre?'

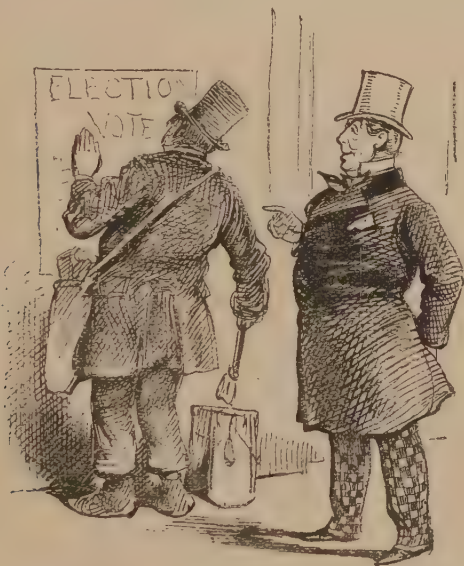
"The man paid no attention, but went on lathering the placard, which he put up with an air of quiet defiance.

" 'You miserable bill-sticker!' said Buckstone, his mannerism coming out very pointedly with his temper, 'if you don't desist, you scoundrel, I'll have you locked up.'

"Whereupon the man, quietly making a closing dab at the poster, said, 'I'll have *you* locked up, you impostor, if you don't mind, for givin' such a bad imitation of Buckstone—could do it better myself.'

"Keeley and Buckstone belonged to a little society called the Kaffirs. When they came out of the club one night rather late it was very cold. Buckstone, who had a great regard for Keeley, said, 'You'd better wrap yourself up, Bob; it's jolly cold!'"

"'Oh, it'll be jolly hot—at Brompton—when I get home,' replied Bob, with his familiar chuckle."



MR. BUCKSTONE AND THE BILL-STICKER.

"Keeley had a peculiar way of kicking out his leg behind in comedy, and also in real life; used to use many expletives. One day, at rehearsal, he was suddenly missed. Something or somebody had annoyed him very much. Byron found him at the back of the pit, kicking out his leg, and quietly remarking to himself, 'Hell-cat!'"

V.

“CHARLES DILLON came to my house to read a new piece; it was *A Life's Ransom*, by Dr. Westland Marston. He brought with him a rather famous actor in his way, Gomersal, once the hero of the Surrey in *Mazeppa*, and such like pieces; he was the Napoleon in the spectacular drama of *The Fall of Moscow*, at Astley's, and he is immortalized by the pen of 'Bon Gaultier' (Sir



LADY THEODORE MARTIN (MISS HELEN FAUCIT).

Theodore Martin) and the pencil of Alfred Crowquill, in 'The Book of Ballads.'⁴ Here's the book

⁴ Two correspondents, one of them a scholar, send me kindly corrections in regard to this delightful travestie. The former informs me that the *nom de plume* "Bon Gaultier" belonged jointly to Sir Theodore Martin and Professor Aytoun. The latter says, "The Book of Ballads," which I quote, was by Aytoun and not by Martin. The truth is, according to "Men of the Time," that Sir Theodore Martin "first became known as an author by his contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* and *Tait's Magazine*, under the signature

and here's 'The Midnight Visit.' I don't know anything finer than the mock heroics of Sir Theodore Martin; and I remember his wife, Miss Helen Faucit, when she was certainly the most charming 'Lady of Lyons' you could possibly imagine. Let us read 'The Midnight Visit,' which is in honour of our friend Gomersal:—

It was the Lord of Castlereagh, he sat within his room,
His arms were crossed upon his breast, his face was marked
with gloom;

They said that St. Helena's Isle had rendered up its charge,
That France was bristling up in arms—the Emperor at
large.

'Twas midnight! all the lamps were dim, and dull as death
the street,

It might be that the watchman slept that night upon his
beat;

When lo! a heavy foot was heard to creak upon the stair,
The door revolved upon its hinge—Great Heaven! What
enters there?

A little man, of stately mien, with slow and solemn stride;
His hands are crossed upon his back, his coat is opened
wide;

And on his vest of green he wears an eagle and a star—
Saint George, protect us! 'tis The Man, the thunderbolt of
war.

Is that the famous hat that waved along Marengo's ridge?
Are those the spurs of Austerlitz, the boots of Lodi's bridge?
Leads he the conscript swarm again from France's hornet
hive?

What seeks the fell usurper here, in Britain, and alive?

Pale grew the Lord of Castlereagh, his tongue was parched and
dry,
And in his brain he felt the glare of that tremendous eye;

of 'Bon Gaultier,' and in conjunction with the late Professor Aytoun he composed 'The Book of Ballads,' which bears that pseudonym, and a volume of translations of 'The Poems and Ballads of Goethe.'"

What wonder that he shrunk in fear, for who could meet the
glance
Of him who reared, 'mid Russian snows, the gonfalon of
France?

From the side-pocket of his vest a pinch the despot took,
Yet not a whit did he relax the sternness of his look.
"Thou thought'st the lion was afar, but he has burst the
chain—
The watchword for to-night is 'France,' the answer 'St.
Helène.'

"And did'st thou deem the barren isles, or ocean's waves could
bind
The master of the universe—the monarch of mankind?
I tell thee, fool, the world itself is all too small for me,
I laugh to scorn thy bolts and bars—I burst them and am
free.

"Thou think'st that England hates me! Mark! This very
night my name
Was thundered in its capital with tumult and acclaim.
They saw me, knew me, owned my power—Proud Lord, I say,
beware,
There's men within the Surrey side, who know to do and
dare!

"To-morrow, in thy very teeth, my standard will I rear—
Ay, well that ashen cheek of thine may blanch and pale with
fear;
To-morrow night another town shall sink in ghastly flames;
And as I crossed the Borodin, so shall I cross the Thames!

"Thou'lt seize me, wilt thou, ere the dawn? Weak lordling,
do thy worst!
These hands ere now have broke thy chains, thy fetters they
have burst.
Yet, would'st thou know my resting-place? Behold, 'tis
written there!
And let thy coward myrmidons approach me if they dare!"

Another pinch, another stride—he passes through the door—
"Was it a phantom or a man was standing on the floor?
And could that be the Emperor that moved before my eyes?
Ah, yes, too sure it was himself, for here the paper lies."

With trembling hands, Lord Castlereagh undid the mystic scroll,

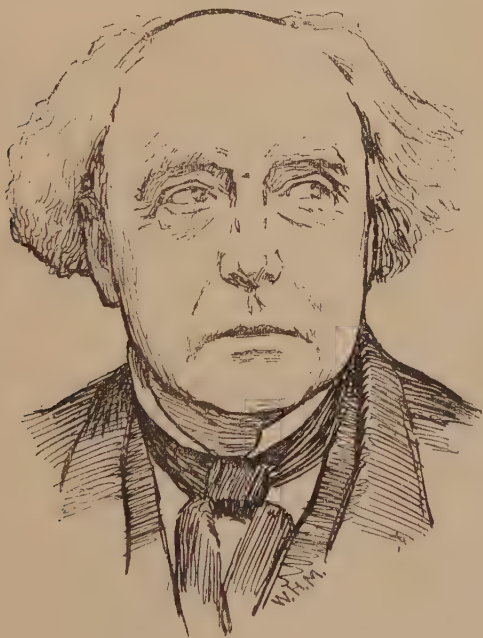
With glassy eye essayed to read, for fear was on his soul—

“What’s here? At Astley’s, every night, the play of Moscow’s

FALL!

NAPOLEON, for the thousandth time, by Mr. GOMERSAL!”

“You were speaking of Robson and Keeley,” said my host, forgetting Dillon and Gomersal for the moment. “They both played ‘Jerry’ in *The Thumping Legacy*. It is a cockney who goes to Corsica; and the other man says, ‘What



MR. ROBERT KEELEY.

do you here? I will tell you. It is now four hundred years since.’ Keeley used to say to him in a very quiet way, ‘Don’t you think we had better take a chair?’ Robson was all ex-

citement, and in tragic tones exclaimed: 'Don't you think we had better be seated?' Keeley was a peculiar little fellow; very short, bald head, comical face; spoke in a serious kind of tone. Very little chap. When he appeared as a witness at Bow Street, there was a seat in the witness-box. They thought he was sitting down. The magistrate said, 'Please to stand up, Mr. Keeley. "I am standing up," said Keeley, in his melancholy manner."

VI.

MR. TOOLE has not the intense tragic moments of Robson, but he has an earnestness of tone and manner which exaggerated in the direction of burlesque, indicates that underlying power of pathos which comes out in such parts as "Michael Garner," "Joe Bright," and "Caleb Plummer." Robson had marvellous moments which suggested tragic gifts of the very highest order; but they were only moments; they were sudden efforts which he could not have maintained, and which in burlesque were tremendous surprises. Toole is a remarkable mimic. He read the first verses of "The Midnight Visit" in the manner of Fechter, and the imitation was as real as the closing lines which he gave in the curious style of Buckstone. His imitations of Keeley are more or less pathetic. They have in them pleasant reminiscences and a loving regard for the dead actor's memory. There is a kindred example of personal admiration in his imitations of Sims Reeves, in regard to which a well-known musical critic said to me the other day, "His singing of Tom Bowling when first I heard it was a revelation to me. It is not burlesque, it is an illustration of Reeves's method, an exact reminiscence, by a man of feeling, more

especially excellent considering that it is an imitation by one who does not profess to have any vocal powers." Toole has told me that when he is riding in cabs or travelling by train he often beguiles the time by humming Reeves's songs, and that the tenderness of them, and his recollections of the delight they have given him when sung by the master, have been a solace to him in his worst hours of depression.

VII.

"BUT you were speaking about Dillon reading to you *A Life's Ransom*," I suggested.

"Yes. Gomersal came as Dillon's friend. He had his pocket full of nuts, and he cracked them quietly all the night. Dillon looked round every now and then to see where the noise came from, and then Gomersal cracked more carefully. He seemed to have but one object—and that was not *A Life's Ransom*.

"At last Dillon discovered him.

"'Who the deuce is that cracking nuts?—Why, it's you, Gomersal!'

"'Very sorry: beg pardon,' said Gomersal, 'I just cracked one to keep myself awake.'

"Dillon was very angry, as well he might be. *A Life's Ransom* was a very good piece; but it was not the sort of play that interested the Napoleonic hero.

"I once tried cracking nuts on a dramatist myself. But I had provocation. I didn't like the play; the dramatist didn't like the nuts. I suppose it is very hard lines when an author has written a play, comes and reads it to you, and you yawn over it, or go to sleep, or crack nuts. At the same time it is rather hard upon an actor to be

read to and hammered at by an author whose work is of no earthly use to him—a good play, but not good for him.

“And this reminds me of several stories about playwrights. Old G——, before he was old, by the way, insisted on reading me a piece. He was always more or less of a bore; I don’t say it disparagingly you know; but he was an awful bore for all that; he couldn’t help it, poor chap; he didn’t know he was a bore. He came to my house. He sat in an armchair near the fire, as close to me as he could conveniently get. I don’t know if you’ve ever noticed it, but bores always do that kind of thing; they allow you no margin—give you no room for escape.

“It was a dull play. To begin with, it was utterly outside my line; a strong blood-and-thunder melodrama, the interest all confined to the hero or the villain, instead of being all in the hands of the low comedian. I was very tired; tried to keep awake, but had every now and then forty decided winks.

“‘You are not attending,’ he said.

“‘Oh, yes, I am,’ I replied, ‘I can always listen best with my eyes shut—don’t get distracted looking at things.’

“‘Where was I, then?’ he would say, which puzzled me, but I tried to remember sufficient of the plot to encourage him to continue.

“‘No, my dear Toole, you are *not* paying attention,’ he said by-and-by, with special emphasis.

“‘Yes, I am,’ I said. ‘I know exactly where you were.’

“‘Where?’

“‘At the end of the third act, where the villain and the hero meet face to face, and the heroine is—’

“ ‘Nothing of the kind,’ he said, ‘that is the third scene of the second act. I read that half an hour ago.’

“ I stammered an apology, however ; said he must excuse me ; I was rather tired, and it was not necessary for me to hear every word to judge of the merits of the piece, so far as I was concerned. And being utterly worn out a few minutes later, he had come so near me to keep me awake, I fell forward into his lap fast asleep.

“ He bore it with as much patience as he could command, and, rolling up his manuscript, said he would come and see me another time. In spite of my invitation to go on to the end, he took a hurried farewell ; and I believe that melodrama was never produced.”

VIII.

“ THERE was a man about town, a good sort of fellow, I believe, a Colonel Addison. He wrote a farce for Wright, called *Abraham Parker*, and another, farce called *The Gorilla*. I and Paul Bedford played the latter. We had to gag it about a good deal. But Addison had no false pride in regard to the piece. ‘I am delighted with it,’ he said to me ; ‘didn’t hear a line of my own. Not one of those kind of authors who insist upon every word of their text being spoken. Come and lunch, Number So-and-so, Argyle Street. We’ll have a chat.’

“ He was so pleasant about our little gags that I accepted his invitation ; got there as good fortune would have it at a quarter to two.

“ The Colonel was out. His son, a precocious little fellow, who received me, said, ‘Pa will be in almost directly, Mr. Toole.’

“ ‘Thank you,’ I replied. ‘You are a fine little fellow; are you going to lunch with Pa?’

“ ‘No,’ he said, going to a drawer and taking out a manuscript, ‘Pa is going to read this and four or five more plays to you!’

“ ‘Is he!’ I exclaimed. ‘That’s very kind of him. Let me see it.’ It was a very formidable manuscript although it professed to be a farce. ‘Will you tell Pa,’ I said, taking up my hat and patting the precocious little fellow’s head, ‘that I am sorry I can’t stay and have luncheon with him to-day, but I will write to him. Of course, little boys must never tell stories under any circumstances; if Pa asks you if you showed me that manuscript, you must say yes, but if he does not, you need not mention it; he might be angry.’

“He looked me up often, however, after this. He was a friend of Knowles, of Manchester, nice fellow; but, oh, that *Gorilla!*”

IX.

“AT the Crystal Palace Dramatic College *fête*, Paul Bedford, myself, and Billington had a show. There were a lot of other shows about. One, adjoining us, was a conjuror’s; a professional conjuror, not an amateur showman, as we were—a very pompous gentleman with greasy hair, and posing very much about very trifling bits of sleight-of-hand. We made a little hole through our booth, communicating with his. We occasionally suffered from *cnnui* and heat, our entertainment being more or less monotonous—the exhibition of Paul Bedford as Chang, the giant, and C. J. Smith as his wife, Lady Chang, and some other nonsense; and, in the intervals, we worried our neighbour, more particularly

with his trick of the vanishing orange. When it disappeared, and he triumphantly asked, 'Where is it now?' we quietly remarked, through our convenient aperture—'Up your sleeve.'

"He bore it for a little while, but presently requested silence. 'I must really not be interrupted,' he said. 'I have performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, and my efforts in the art of legerdemain have always been accepted with gracious favour.'

"On this we shouted, 'Hear, hear!' and the audience applauded. But in due course when the orange trick, or the vanishing half-penny, or the pigeons, or the wonderful paper which came out of his mouth in the shape of a barber's pole and was then consumed in a bundle of flax without injury to his sacred person, was being demonstrated, we dropped in exasperating suggestions that we could see how he did it, that it wasn't a barber's pole at all, that he had the pigeons in his pocket, that his box had a false bottom to it, and so on; until at last, in sheer despair, he exclaimed that he had never been so grossly insulted in his life; he had travelled all over the world, and had even performed before savages, but never had he been so shamefully treated.

"He was a very excitable fellow, and seeing him so disturbed, we gradually dropped him. We heard from him later, when, after investigation, he suspected the conspirators. But we explained to him that he couldn't expect anybody to be serious at a dramatic *fête*, and furthermore, that we rather envied his ability.

"Paul Bedford used to gurggle over a story of the Sheffield or Yorkshire dialect, which reminds me of one I told Dickens that greatly amused him. Paul was on a coach, crossing a ridge of hill not far

from Sheffield, known as 'Froggatt's Edge.' A man lost his hat. The passengers cried out, 'T'at's on t'edge, t'at's on t'edge!' Paul Bedford said, 'Take me back to London.' My story is a trifle more elaborate, but none the less true. I recall the scene to-day, chiefly remembering its effect on Dickens.

"They are playing *The Lady of Lyons* and *The Bleeding Nun* at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield. Two boys are discussing the performance outside.

"FIRST BOY: 'Has't been to play?'

"SECOND BOY: 'Aye.'

"FIRST BOY: 'Wot were't play?'

"SECOND BOY: 'T' Lady a Lyons.'

"FIRST BOY: 'Wot were't Lady a Lyons up to?'

SECOND BOY: 'Üp to nowt; ah cum oot t'end a t'act, couldn't mek oot wot t'were aboot moren t'man in t'moon.'

"FIRST BOY: 'Wot were't t'other play?'

"SECOND BOY: 'T' Bleedin' Nun.'

"FIRST BOY: 'Wot were't 'Bleedin' Nun up to?'

"SECOND BOY: 'T' Bleedin' Nun were up to now't, ah come oot 'fore it was ovver; couldn't mek oot wot t'were aboot moren t'man in t'moon.'

"'They must have had a pleasant evening,' Dickens remarked.

"Since it is so difficult for a Londoner to understand them, I often wonder how it is they understand us so well as they appear to do."

X.

"DURING an engagement of twelve nights with Paul Bedford at Edinburgh, Mr. Wyndham, the manager, asked me if I would play at the Lord

Provost's in an entertainment given to Prince Alfred, who was the Lord Provost's guest.

" 'Not for a fee,' I said, and I have always acted upon this principle. 'As the Lord Provost's guest, I will be most happy to assist in amusing the Prince and his friends.'

" In due course I received an invitation, and I remember the occasion as a very pleasant evening. *The Wonderful Woman* was the chief attraction. I played 'Crepon, the cobbler.'

" The old Duke of Buccleuch was amongst the guests. I didn't know who he was. He made himself very agreeable to me, and I only became acquainted with him as a duke late in the evening. I don't say that he didn't look like a duke; but I have known men of very inferior position who assumed a great deal more. 'Come to my cottage,' he said, 'at Dalkeith.' He was rather like Compton in appearance: had a smack of his dry humour. 'I once played myself,' he said, 'and rather liked it; I played "Destifina."'

XI.

" Not long since, at Leamington, a gentleman who shall be nameless—he mightn't like to see this incident in print, and I wouldn't give him pain for the world—called upon me (he was an Adelphi playgoer in my early days); he met me on the stairs as I was going out. I knew him slightly.

" 'Well, I'm so glad to see you,' he said, seizing my hand: 'not able to come last night, or certainly should have done so. Haven't called upon you about *that piece*—don't be afraid! Just wanted to shake hands. . . . You're looking well. Good house last night? . . . Of course, that goes without saying. . . . But I thought you'd like

to know in regard to *that piece*, which, after reading, you said was not in your way, that I have submitted it to Compton, who, shaking me warmly by the hand, said, "My dear captain, there's something in it."

"The piece he referred to was something he had sent to me quite twenty years before this conversation. Good or bad, I had forgotten it until that moment, and he had evidently thought I did not care for it; but he spoke about the piece as if I had read it only the previous day, and during the whole of our conversation, although he kept informing me that he had not come to speak about *that piece*, he spoke of nothing else.

"I said Compton was a fine actor. 'Yes,' he said, 'and he believed in *that piece*.' I trailed other great names before him; mentioned Webster and Wright, since he would talk of actors and acting; but for three-quarters of an hour he continually dragged me back to '*that piece*.'

"'A friend of mine,' he went on presently, 'who read that piece only a week ago, said it ought not to be lost.'

"'Have you lost it?' I inquired innocently.

"'Oh, no. Of course not,' he said, 'I mean ought not to be lost to the public.'

"'Oh, I see,' I said. 'Quite so.'

"'Excuse me a moment—I'll give you an idea of the plot; I'm quite sure you've forgotten it. If not you will remember that the first act opens with an old man, who has got a niece.'

"'How is she?' I said, in sheer despair.

"'How is who?'

"'Your niece.'

"'Not *my* niece! She's in the plot. It's the play I'm talking about.'

“ ‘Oh!’ I said, ‘I thought you were talking about your family.’

“ ‘Oh, no,’ he said. ‘Now, look here, Mr. Toole, I don’t want to bother you about *that piece*, but the plot is most original. Compton says it is; and my friends all think so.’

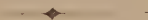
“ ‘And they think it ought not to be lost.’

“ ‘They do; and I am determined it shall not,’ he said. ‘I have got it in my pocket. The *dénouement* of the first act, if you remember, brings the heroine to the edge of a precipice, where she is seized and thrown over by the villain.’

“ ‘Oh, that’s a pity,’ I said, ‘because that will end the play, if you lose your heroine in the first act.’

“ ‘But I don’t lose her. She reappears—’

“And he went on so persistently that I thought of the young fellow in *The Ancient Mariner*, and began to grow dizzy. At last I fear I made more or less of a bolt of it, saying, ‘Excuse me, I must go to rehearsal, but I will see you, I hope, another day?’ And so we parted.”



VIII.

CHIEFLY CONCERNING THE QUEEN'S AND THE GAIETY.

At the Queen's—First production of *Dearer than Life*, with Irving as ‘Bob Gassit’—At the Gaiety—Farce and comedy—A memorable engagement with Phelps and Mathews—Reminiscences of Phelps—A little jest at Manchester—

Phelps on Mathews and Mathews on Phelps—A young man who didn't set the Thames on fire—Phelps and Macready—Notes on the work and character of Phelps—Burnand and *Artful Cards*.

I.

"IN January, 1863, I accepted an engagement at the Queen's with Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, the company including Henry Irving, Charles Wyndham, John Clayton, H. J. Brough, Miss Nellie Moore, and Miss Henrietta Hodson, John Ryder being the stage-manager, and Liston acting manager. Our first production was Byron's admirable play, *Dearer than Life*.¹ It followed up

¹ "The plot of *Dearer than Life* is comparatively simple. Its hero, Michael Garner, is an industrious tradesman, who has acquired a comfortable subsistence by long years of honest labour. A strange compound of shrewdness and good-nature, a man whose natural quickness of perception is a little clouded by an unusually affectionate and trusting disposition, it is his lot to be married to a woman whose whole hopes are bound up in an only son. This son, at the commencement of the story, is about twenty-five years of age, and employed in a merchant's office in the city. It is the old tale of temptation and weakness. By the influence of a wily and unscrupulous associate, Charles Garner is led into betting and silly speculation. He is not deficient in good feeling, but he has ideas above his station. The story commences on the twenty-seventh anniversary of old Garner's wedding. By the 'scratching' of a favourite, Charles has been irretrievably ruined. He is engaged to a pretty cousin, and this young lady, Lucy Garner, is loved with a strange earnestness by his worthless and perfidious friend, Bob Gassit. A curious old uncle appears in the form of Mr. Ben Garner, who is chronically under the influence of gin. Lucy is one of those true and constant lovers of whose existence plays and romances inform us. She knows her Charlie is wild, but she is bent on redeeming and reforming him. She is quite proof against the insidious advances of Mr. Bob Gassit, and, though she does not share Mrs. Garner's blind confidence, on her side she contrives to minister to the old lady's weakness. Old Garner has a shrewd suspicion that his son has not been doing right, but he never imagines that he has committed

a line of character in which I had previously been fortunate enough to interest the public and the

a crime. After a time, it appears from Charlie's embarrassed manner that he is in trouble. Lucy finds this out, and taxes him with being in difficulties, and promises to relieve him by obtaining a sum of money which has been carefully hoarded up by his mother. In the meantime the company invited to assist in the celebrating of the anniversary of the marriage arrives. Chief among these is Mr. Boulter, an old friend of Michael's, who has gained some small reputation for convivial talents. Young Garner, rather refined by intercourse with sharpers, sneers at Boulter, but Michael fraternizes with him, talks of old times, and sings a song about the grip of an honest man. The party adjourn to dinner, but while they are enjoying themselves, Mr. Kedgeley, the employer of Charles, appears, demands an interview with Michael Garner, and informs him that his son has forged and embezzled. The heart-broken father calls for the reprobate, urges him to fly from justice, and accuses himself of the crime. The last act is in a garret at Lambeth. The whole family have been reduced from comparative comfort to starvation. Old Garner is a messenger earning a few shillings per week, Lucy is a seamstress, Mrs. Garner is bedridden, and Gassit is still persecuting Lucy with his suit. True to her old love, the heroine resists all the devices of Gassit, and though her landlady is fighting for rent, bears out patiently to the last. Ben Garner, in a fit of maudlin repentance, comes up to the garret, begs his brother to forgive him, and leaves a bottle of gin, which the despairing messenger swallows. In the intoxication which follows, Michael Garner loses all control of himself, and indulges in a bitter invective of his worthless son. This is overheard by Mrs. Garner, who shrieks out and falls as if dead. This misfortune sobers Garner, but at an opportune moment the long-lost son turns up with abundance of money to save his starving relatives. The piece ends with the defeat of the schemer Gassit, and the reward of virtue in the persons of old Garner, his wife, and Lucy. Of course the burden of the drama rests upon the shoulders of Mr. J. L. Toole, for whom it was written. Long ago in *Caleb Plummer*, Mr. Toole proved that he not only possessed the quaintest and most genial humour, but that, like most genuine humorists, he had a large fund of pathos. Nothing could have been more natural, more touching, more effective than his representation of 'Michael Garner,' the honest tradesman, the loving husband, the courageous and self-sacrificing toiler. The character may be rare, but that it is real was proved

Press. 'Michael Garner' has always been a favourite with my audiences, and the play is made memorable by Charles Dickens's prediction that there was an actor playing 'Bob Gassit' at the Queen's who would be heard of again. That actor was our friend Irving. And what a support I had! You don't get such a cast nowadays. Fancy—Wyndham, Clayton, Brough, Nellie Moore, Miss Hodson, and Irving!

"Leaving the Queen's, I starred at the Standard for six or seven weeks, and at the Crystal Palace, Irving accompanying me. A year later I returned to the Queen's for a short season, and played 'Jack Snipe' in Watts Phillips's *Not Guilty*. In the same year I commenced a long engagement at the Gaiety, opening in a new domestic comedy

by the actor. Every situation in the piece was made striking and successful by Mr. Toole's thorough earnestness and his artistic attention to detail. The second act bears a dangerous resemblance to the second act of the *Porter's Knot*, and with any other actor it might have been a failure. But Mr. Toole is thoroughly original, and the resemblance of the piece to that in which the late Mr. Robson achieved his greatest success, only serves to show the contrast between the styles of the two actors. In some of the scenes he far excelled his impersonation of the old toy-maker, great as that was. The finest points were in the close of the second and the beginning of the third acts. The intense grief of the father when his son's guilt is revealed, the outburst of passionate affection when he implores him to fly from justice, and the utter despair which followed, were wonderfully realized. In the garret scene Mr. Toole improved upon himself. His delineation of the brave old man who could endure starvation with a pleasant face, and could be cheerful under the heaviest burden of misery, was only surpassed by the sudden exhibition of passion when, excited by the drink which his worthless brother has brought him, Michael flamed out into a denunciation of his son's guilt. Again, on the conclusion of the drama, when the old man's ready wit, inspired by an unexpected good fortune, obtained a fair opportunity, Mr. Toole contrived to mingle with consummate skill the humour and the pathos of the situation."—*Standard*, June 9th, 1868.

written for me by Byron, *Uncle Dick's Darling*,² a piece which is still popular with my audiences.

² "Mr. J. L. Toole has commenced an engagement at this theatre by performing the principal character in a domestic drama new to London, written by Mr. Henry J. Byron, and entitled *Uncle Dick's Darling*. 'Dick Dollard' (Mr. J. L. Toole), familiarly called 'Uncle Dick,' is by profession a Cheap Jack. This profession has already been made familiar to playgoers by the Adelphi melodrama *Flowers of the Forest*, in which an itinerant trader of the kind was represented first by the late Mr. Wright, afterwards by Mr. Toole. But Mr. Byron seems to have more immediately contemplated the 'Dr. Marigold' of Mr. Charles Dickens than any character previously exhibited on the stage. Dick and his friend Joe Lennard, a blacksmith, have taken charge of Mary Belton, a foundling, and though she is expected to marry Joe, the ambitious Dick places her in a genteel boarding-school, kept by Mrs. Torrington. When her education is completed he pays her a visit, taking with him a formal proposal of marriage from Joe, but is considerably perplexed by a remark made by Mrs. Torrington, to the effect that Mary, being now by education a lady, must not marry a person of her guardian's rank in society. While he is seated on the steps of his van meditating on this remark, he is further perplexed by the appearance of Mr. Chevenix, a gentleman of wealth and influence, who has fallen in love with Mary at the house of one of her schoolfellows, and offers to make her his wife. On the following morning he is to call for Dick's reply, and in the meanwhile the Cheap Jack falls asleep. A considerable lapse of time apparently takes place, and when we see Mary in the second act she is the wife of Mr. Chevenix, living in great splendour, but far from happy, for her husband is a cold, austere man, evidently modelled upon Mr. Dombey, and she has imprudently set her affection upon the Hon. Claude Lorrimer, a *roué* of the *genus* exquisite. Uncle Dick, paying her a visit, is treated with rude hauteur by Mr. Chevenix, and is afflicted by the discovery that his darling encourages the dishonourable advances of Lorrimer. Another apparent lapse of time brings us to the third act, and we find Joe Lennard working, broken-hearted, at his forge, and discoursing with Dick on old times. From a newspaper the friends learn that Lorrimer has been lost at sea, and it speaks of him as a conspicuous personage in the great Chevenix divorce case, and presently Mary is seen at the window, a wandering outcast. Dick is not inclined to admit her, but at last yields to the persuasions of the more tender-hearted Joe, and she dies in the

I always enjoy playing 'Uncle Dick,' and should enjoy it still more if I had my original 'Chevenix'



MR. TOOLE AS "MICHAEL GARNER" IN "DEARER THAN LIFE."

back ; not that Billington does not make a capital 'Chevenix,' but my early associations with Irving

presence of her old friends. At this point the scene suddenly changes. Dick is discovered on the steps of his van, as we saw him at the end of the first act, and we find that the marriage of Mary and Mr. Chevenix, with the misfortunes consequent thereon, has been merely a dream. As in the case of *Victorine*, the dream has a practical result. Mary marries, not Chevenix, but Joe. This is a very pretty and ingeniously constructed drama, here and there a little too prolix, and somewhat too much imbued with the sentiment that associates virtue with corduroy rather than with clothing of finer texture. Three of the characters afford good scope for acting. These

in the part are so pleasant that, somehow, I always feel there is a kind of blank in the piece.



MISS NELLIE FARREN.

Of course, this is only a bit of personal sentiment, and the audience knows nothing of it; it are 'Uncle Dick,' one of those half-pathetic, half-comic personages whom for years Mr. Toole has made his own; the engaging 'Mary,' very nicely played by Miss Neilson; and 'Mr. Chevenix,' whose ridiculous formality is most happily elaborated by Mr. Henry Irving, and who, in the first act, seems to be made up into a resemblance of a celebrated statesman. The success of the piece is most decided."—*Times*, December 15th, 1869.

makes no difference to my acting, unless it may unconsciously add to the sentimental interest of the part.

“I played a big round of new and old pieces at the Gaiety, having the valuable assistance of that clever *comédienne*, Miss Nellie Farren, who, I fear, has more or less wasted her great abilities since then by an exclusive devotion to burlesque. I am not saying anything against burlesque; I have done a good deal in that direction myself; but I never allowed it to engross all my time and attention. I am not quoting myself as an example of genius which might have been spoiled by burlesque; nor am I suggesting that Miss Nellie Farren could not to-day, if she chose, or had the opportunity, play pure comedy as well as ever; but I fear that working in the same groove for many years, and that groove not by any means the most artistic or desirable—namely, mere burlesque—is not calculated to improve one’s art; indeed, it is calculated to lower its tone and purpose.”

“But you yourself enjoy farce more than comedy, and farce is not the highest order of dramatic art,” I suggested, “one blesses the man who invented laughter; and one thanks Byron and Burnand for the hearty, rollicking burlesques you played at the Gaiety.”

“Yes, and I enjoyed them; the work both of Burnand and Byron in the region of burlesque is, as a rule, of a far higher order than much of what is now called farcical comedy. As for what I like to play, I believe it very much depends upon what my audiences like. When my audiences are pleased with a serious piece, I am pleased; but I particularly enjoy a comic part; if I am in good robust health I revel in it, one has so much more margin than in serious comedy. I invented the business of the brush in ‘Spriggins,’ where I put

it on my knee for protection. I had a touch of the gout, and a desire for mischief made me put the blacking brush on my knee where the major would strike me. His surprise was a first-rate unrehearsed effect, and I have done it ever since. Yes, I enjoy a rollicking farce. I laugh with the audience, and get carried away by the fun of it; and I enjoy pathetic scenes, too, but they tire me more than funny ones. I feel the sorrows of 'Caleb Plummer' sincerely, and always did; but of late years I feel quite grieved for him. I think the scene between the three, his daughter, himself, and 'Dot,' where she confesses her love for 'Tackleton,' and I have to tell her what he is, and when I know that my deceptions are at last discovered, are very beautiful; but the return of the boy who was thought to be drowned, coming on the top of the daughter's forgiveness, is altogether a most heart-stirring scene. There has been some discussion about actors' feelings. No audience, in my opinion, was ever made to weep unless the actor had wept, or could weep, at what touched the audience. At the same time, an actor must be able to control himself. It is delightful, in such characters as 'Michael Garner,' 'Caleb Plummer,' 'Bob Cratchit,' and so on, to feel that the audience is in sympathy with the sentiment of the part you are playing. I sometimes think my Scotch audiences are more deeply moved by pathos than any other audiences, though they are quieter except at the ends of acts. The Midlanders laugh heartily; so do my London friends; but, after all, audiences are very much alike all the world over. A London audience one night will be quite different in its acceptance of fun or pathos from the audience that sits through the same piece the next night."

II.

"DURING my first seasons at the Gaiety, we played Byron's *Tottles*, *Wait and Hope*, *Paul Pry*, and *Our Clerks*. Miss Farren's 'Phœbe,' in *Paul Pry*, was as bright and clever as I should say it is possible to make it ; and she was delightful in *Our Clerks*. We played *Aladdin the Second*



MR. LIONEL BROUGH.

(in which I introduced the catch phrase, 'and still I am not happy') and *Artful Cards*, a capital piece by Burnand ; and when the Spelling Bee mania was on I did a *Spelling Bee*, which was an immense go ; I played the part of 'Professor Muddle.' We did the burlesque of *The Forty Thieves* and *Don Giovanni*, and Burnand's *Babes in the Wood* ; also *Bib and Tucker* ; I

was 'Bib' and Brough was 'Tucker.' *Thespis*, in two acts, was Gilbert and Sullivan's first effort in the way of opera-bouffe or comic English opera; we produced it at the Gaiety; also *Shilly-Shally*, by Trollope and Reade, and when I closed my engagement, *Much Too Clever*, by yourself and John Oxenford, had just become one of the most popular of our first pieces.

"During the engagement of Phelps and Charles Mathews at the Gaiety, I played with these two great actors—'Bob Acres,' in *The Rivals*; 'Mawworm,' in *The Hypocrite*; and 'Bulgruddery,' in *John Bull*. I then gave farewell performances prior to my visit to America, taking the Globe for the purpose, and I produced there for the first time Albery's *Wig and Gown*, and Byron's *Fool and His Money*. My season lasted ten weeks, and the business was first-rate.

"I think my season with Phelps at the Gaiety was one of the most agreeable in all my experiences. I got to know Phelps very well, and to like him very much.

"When I was a boy, I used to go and see Phelps play at Sadler's Wells—watch for him at the stage-door. I saw him play all his leading parts. I saw him the first time he played 'Sir Pertinax Macsycophant,' in *The Man of the World*.³ It was

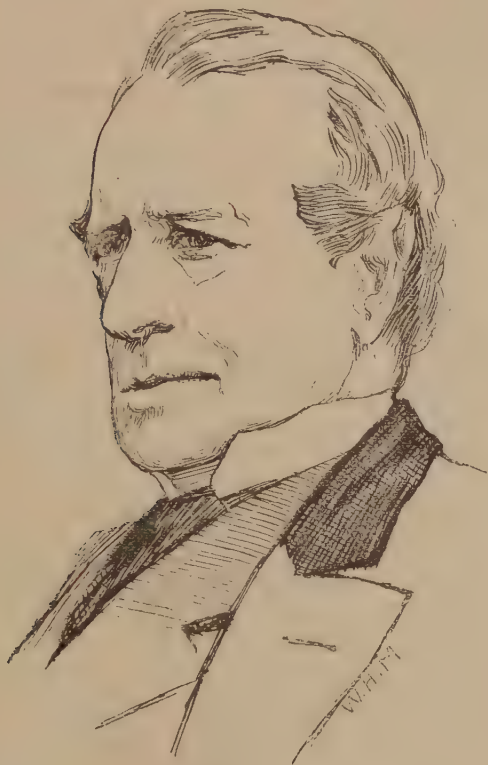
³ "The occasion of Mr. Greenwood's benefit last night at Sadler's Wells Theatre has given the town the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps in a new line of character, and the performance of Macklin's somewhat old-fashioned but admirable comedy of *The Man of the World* has enabled that able and versatile actor to add another character to his well-stored *répertoire*.

"Sir Pertinax Macsycophant has, with some trifling exceptions, when it has been revived to show the capacity of some actor to enunciate the Scottish dialect, been abandoned since the powerful and sarcastic Cooke gave the terrible portrait in its full vitality. The celebrated men who have since occupied

for Greenwood's benefit at Sadler's Wells. The house was packed so full that he had to come down

the foremost position of the theatre have not attempted the delineation, though it embodies the most available and the most legitimate means of showing the actor's highest art—the power of impersonation, and the enunciation of a drastic satire of the highest flavour and the most potent effect. The character is in itself repulsive; the author has drawn it with a rigid regard for truth that seems to have been dictated by a personal abhorrence. It has not one popular speech—it has not one graceful phrase—it has not a single redeeming point. The resources of the theatre have not been called in to aid its situations or enforce its points. It is a character with which nothing can be done but by the aid of the purest art—it tests the actor in every word—it demands in every line the consummate performer. It is admirably drawn, and contrives to rivet the attention for five acts, and to supply the place of plot, sentiment, and action. To succeed in it is to achieve a high triumph, and this triumph Mr. Phelps attained by the purest and severest exercise of his art. From his first interview with his son till his diabolical and final curse, every tone, every look was emphatic and characteristic. In his devilish history of the crawling arts by which he attained station and wealth, he rose to the sublime of comedy, and the bitter satire thrilled whilst it almost appalled. It unmasked the villain, but the character was admirably developed, and, safe in a nobler state of society, we could afford to laugh, or rather to scoff, at the unmitigated scoundrel. We felt that the whip of satire was in a powerful hand, and the sordid vices were receiving a wholesome and severe chastisement. The great merit of the performance consists in its being given with tremendous power, and in its yet preserving the *vis comica*. Such a scourging of vice elevates the theatre into a wholesome purifier, and its professors into valuable assistants to moral teachers. The portrayal, as a piece of art, is beyond common praise, and must attract every connoisseur of the drama to witness it. We have not space to point out the various excellences of the portrait, but can truly say we never remember—though we remember the whole of the career of the elder Kean and of Miss O'Neill,—to have seen a more potent piece of acting. The comedy was tastefully put on the stage, and performed in all respects well by Mr. Barrett, Mr. F. Robinson, Mrs. Marston, and Miss Fitzpatrick, the latter being very agreeable and charming in Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt. The house was crowded in every part by a most respectable audience, the esteemed cha-

to the footlights and address the audience. There had been some murmuring among those who were



MR. PHELPS.

over-crowded. He told them that any lady or gentleman who couldn't obtain seats or were uncom-

racter of the acting-manager always drawing a remarkably full house. And we are sure the lovers of dramatic art will feel obliged to him for giving them the opportunity of seeing Mr. Phelps to such extraordinary advantage. It will revive the popularity of a comedy which by no means should become obsolete; for though originally perhaps a little too much directed against a particular nation, it is still universal in its application."—F. G. Tomlins in the *Morning Advertiser* Nov. 28th, 1851.

fortable would have their money returned to them at the box-office. It was rather a nervous sort of thing for him to have to do upon such an occasion. It was a great night. He made a tremendous hit in the part of 'Sir Pertinax,' which continued to be one of his favourite and most remarkable impersonations.

"Mathews was very jolly at the Gaiety. He used to say in a chaffing way he was afraid it was a bad thing giving the public so much; they would always be expecting to see us three together: 'and I cannot afford to carry Phelps about the country.'

"In *John Bull*, Phelps, of course, played 'Job Thornbury'; Charles Mathews, 'Shuffleton'; and I played the Irishman, who speaks the first lines. I was a little nervous, having to struggle with the brogue, and just as I spoke two seats in the gallery broke down. The commotion upset me a little, but I got over it when I found that the noise was not hostile to my brogue.

"Phelps said to me, 'Hollingshead wants us to play together in a piece specially written for the three of us.' He asked me what I thought about it—if I knew any piece that would suit us. I said, 'Yes, I know the very thing. It would, I believe, be an immense go.' I excited the dear old fellow's interest tremendously. 'Well,' he said, at last, 'what is it?' '*Ici on parle Français*, with Phelps as the Major, Mathews as the Frenchman, and myself as Spriggins!'

"When Phelps was very much amused, or very much moved, he closed his eyes, and occasionally, as you know, thrust his hand into the breast of his waistcoat. He closed his eyes on this occasion and chuckled immensely.

"Irving and Phelps lodged in the same house at Manchester. Irving was then playing with the

Batemans. Phelps was very regular in his habits ; went to bed immediately after he got home and was up early in the morning. These were not Irving's habits ; he is fond of the night ; likes to take a rest after his work, a cup of tea and a book in the morning. So they did not meet as often as they might have done. But Phelps had a very high opinion of Irving, which he expressed to me on several occasions."

III.

"ONE night I was passing through Manchester, on my way to Glasgow, and knowing that Phelps was there, staying at a well-known theatrical house—Mrs. Brown's—I called upon him. He had gone to some official dinner, but Mrs. Brown said he would be home at ten o'clock.

"I told her not to say who I was, as I contemplated a little joke, but to inform him that a gentleman had called, and would call again.

"Phelps was at home to the minute. I was in the passage, and heard him go upstairs.

"When he had got into his room, I sent up word to say that I wanted him to help me on my way by playing for my benefit ; I would play 'Macbeth' to his 'Macduff,' and he 'Iago' to my 'Othello.'

"Mrs. Brown was a bright sort of woman, and I got her to deliver this as a message, saying that my name was Jacob Simpkins.

"I listened, and heard him say, 'Tell him to come to the theatre to-morrow morning. I will not be troubled in this way at my rooms and at this time of night.' He grumbled and marched about. 'Play for his benefit ! Never heard of him ! What does he mean ?'

"When she came down, I wrote him a letter in

the hall, badly spelt, in which I informed him that I had seen him play certain parts at Sadler's Wells—a more or less ignorant burlesque kind of letter—and that, if he was not inclined to play for my benefit, would he spare me a shilling or two, or a little refreshment; couldn't he send me a little refreshment down?

"I modelled my letter on many begging epistles that I had received myself, and I asked Mrs. Brown to supplement the letter by saying that if he'd send me a little drop of something down to drink his health, it shouldn't be mentioned at Islington.

"He was very angry at this. Said he wouldn't send me a little drop of something down; I might come to the theatre the next day at eleven o'clock, if he could help me he would; but he would not have me there, and if I didn't go he would be very much inclined to force me. It was a most disgraceful thing to worry him in that way.

"In the midst of his rage I pushed my way past Mrs. Brown, getting on the shady side of her, and said, 'Sir, sir; a little of something hot!' Before he could express his indignation at this intrusion, I had allowed him to recognize me. He was very merry over the incident, and we spent a pleasant and agreeable evening."

IV.

"SOME people thought Phelps starchy and stiff; but he was naturally shy and bashful, and to those who knew him, genial, cordial, and of very agreeable and pleasant manners.

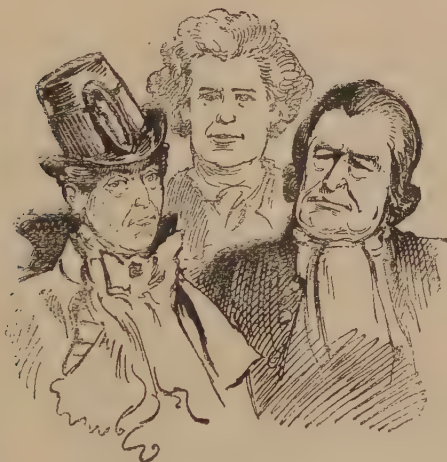
"When we were playing in *John Bull* at the Gaiety we were photographed together for the *Illustrated London News*; the three of us, Phelps, Mathews, and myself. The photographer was very much impressed with his work, and very

anxious ; and just as he had posed to his entire satisfaction, Phelps gave one of his little nervous coughs.

"Mathews remarked, 'It's no good trying to get your tragedy cough into the picture, Phelps ; it can't be done.'

"And of course it could not. Don't think the most scientific artist has yet discovered a way to photograph a tragedy cough—a comedy smile is, of course, a very different thing.

"We were photographed in character. Phelps



PHELPS, MATHEWS, AND TOOLE, IN "JOHN BULL."

had on one of his heavy tragic wigs, and Mathews one of his tall comedy hats. Just before the last pose, the photographer suggested that Mr. Mathews should take off his hat. 'It will make your face lighter.'

"Mathews, in his quick, merry way, taking off his hat, said, 'Don't you think if Mr. Phelps took off his tragedy wig it would make *his* face lighter?'

"It was a very interesting business altogether ;

more particularly for me, studying the special characteristics and individualities of these two very remarkable men, Phelps as great and delightful in his line as Mathews in his. I drew them both out afterwards about each other. Phelps said of Mathews: 'An admirable actor; but, don't you think, rather flippant?' Mind you, they both admired each other very much. Mathews said of Phelps: 'A fine actor; but, off the stage, rather heavy, eh?'"

v.

"PHELPS, at Sadler's Wells, had been induced by a friend to take that friend's son into the company. He was a bit of a swell in his way, the young fellow, very fond of acting, and could not be got to settle down to regular work. Was anxious to go upon the stage, and Phelps was induced to give him a salary and bring him into the company with a view to his getting on. He began by playing a small part in *Timon of Athens*.

"One night during the performance the young man did not turn up. He sent no excuse either by letter or in any other way, and the next morning there was no communication from him. So Phelps gave instructions to the stage-porter that he was not to be admitted to the theatre again. The young man came the next night and received this message, at which he was very angry; and he waited about all the evening until he could speak to Mr. Phelps.

"He caught Phelps leaving the stage-door, and asked for an explanation.

"Whereupon Phelps said, 'Why, what do you mean, sir? You never came to the theatre at all last night.'

“ ‘ No, I did not.’

“ ‘ Why ?’

“ ‘ Such a night as it was, Mr. Phelps ! Raining in torrents. Why I wouldn't have sent a dog out.’

“ The explanation rather staggered Phelps. One mentions it as an illustration of how little some people understand about theatres and theatrical work. Phelps forgave him and took him back ; but I need hardly say that he did not ‘ set the Thames on fire.’ ”

VI.

“ WHEN Phelps came to Drury Lane with Macready, he alternated the parts of ‘ Macbeth ’ and ‘ Macduff.’ He made a great hit in ‘ Macduff.’ It was one of his best performances. The fight was terrific. You know when Macready was fighting he always, under his breath, used to bully ‘ Macduff,’ calling him ‘ Beast !’ ‘ Wretch !’ ‘ Scoundrel !’ &c. It was suggested to Phelps that he should do the same. So when Macready called him ‘ Beast !’ Phelps retorted, ‘ Brute !’ ‘ Demon !’ ‘ Fiend !’ ‘ Ruffian !’ &c. The play over, Phelps expected to be rebuked, and, as he anticipated, was promptly sent for to Mr. Macready's room. But it was to be praised.

“ ‘ Thank you very much, Mr. Phelps ; more particularly in the fight. I have never found anybody before to work with me so pleasantly.’

“ I asked Phelps if this story was true, and he said, ‘ Yes, it is ; quite true.’ ”

VII.

IF the career of Mr. Phelps was not what is called an eventful one, it makes, in the hands of

his nephew, Mr. W. May Phelps and Mr. John Forbes Robertson, a singularly interesting biography. "The story," remarks my host, "is capitally told in their introductory chapter," and on this hint I venture to quote the leading paragraphs of this admirable prologue to a delightful book :—

"Samuel Phelps inherited the instincts of a gentleman, and throughout the whole of his career he never forgot that he was one. He was of good family, and, though not what is called college-bred, of good education. He was a doting husband and father and a fast friend. Exceedingly fond of children, he would often take an infant out of the arms of any nurse he might meet in his walks and kiss it.

"Attached to his home, he would rather dine with his family on plain fare than sit down to a banquet without them. Not that he by any means despised good things; for, when they came in his way, nothing pleased him more than having a few friends round his table to share them with him. He had a great liking for gardening and even agriculture, and, had he been able to retire early in life, he would have made a good country gentleman. At Chelsea, where he resided from 1840 to 1844, he had a large piece of ground attached to his house, where he grew some beautiful specimens of choice flowers and plants, giving them his own personal attention. He was as pleased with his achievements in this way as he was with his success on the stage. His gardener, for the greater part of this period, was an Irishman, who had held the same position at William Cobbett's some years before, and was mightily proud of both his masters, as he told one of the present writers.

"The Lion Hotel, Farningham, Kent, was his

principal residence when fishing or shooting. He spent more time in that county than in any other part of the kingdom, and he was known to all the farmers round about. He took great interest in all that pertained to their welfare, and even went so far out of his usual custom as to take the chair at some of their club dinners, when held at this house. They had no idea who he was, and simply regarded him as a sportsman, who liked to mix in their society. E. L. Blanchard tells an anecdote of one of them discovering him, to his great astonishment, as the Doge of Venice, when he brought his family up to see that piece at Drury Lane Theatre in 1867. Mr. Phelps had no wish ever to be lionized, and no doubt told the proprietor of the Lion Hotel of his desire to remain incognito.

"To his profession Mr. Phelps brought immense perseverance. He was a great reader, and, although not a classical scholar, he was familiar through translations with all the great minds of the antique world, and he remained a student in every sense of the word almost to the day of his death. As an actor we place him second to none. In tragedy he combined many of the best characteristics of John Kemble and Edmund Kean. He had much of the dignity, breadth, and intensity of the former as well as the fire and impulsive energy of the latter. He was endowed with a good figure, standing five feet nine inches when he first appeared in London. His face was generously modelled, and possessed expressive features with a fair-sized grey eye. He had a magnificent natural voice, whose compass embraced every shade of emotion.

"Many admirers of Macready have stated that Phelps founded his tragic style on his great predecessor; and one paper said that, 'while he showed great fire and pathos, he possessed less subtlety than

Macready, and never rose to the height of his nobler impulses, or those supreme bursts of emotion with which he could, upon occasion, electrify and excite his audience in an extraordinary degree.'

"All that need be said as to Phelps taking Macready as an example in tragedy is simply this, that Phelps's style and manner were completely formed and publicly recognized and acknowledged before ever he came to London at all. He never saw Macready act from the front of the house but once in his life; and he was too angry at his treatment of him during the first four years he was in London to think anything about him or his acting. He laughed at the idea himself, when questioned upon the point by the present writers, and when asked why he did not publicly deny it, he said it was not worth his while to deny what he thought must be patent to all those who saw much of him. He added that his style was his own, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, and that he never saw any of his great predecessors after he was old enough to form any opinion of them. To us, in the great majority of his tragic characters, he was as different from Macready as it was possible to be in the case of two men otherwise so equally matched.

"Mr. Phelps married very early in life. He was just over twenty-two, while his wife was only sixteen. She was a daughter of a friend of the lady in whose house he was a boarder. The wedding, although it was known they were engaged, took place without the privity of the mother, who was a widow: first, because she might reasonably plead for a little delay, and secondly, on the very characteristic ground that they wished the whole affair to pass off as quietly as possible. Moreover, he was on the eve of his

departure for the North to commence his career as an actor.

"The marriage was in every way a happy one. Never were a couple more mutually devoted to each other. She anticipated his every wish; and when, in 1867, she finally left him after seven years' intense suffering from cancer, of which disease her own mother and only sister died, he was so cast down that his family thought he would never rally again. Indeed, he never was the same man afterwards. On the morning after her departure he told his nephew that he had lived through twenty deaths during the previous seven years.

"He was a great pedestrian, and never rode until very late in life. He would frequently start from his house in Canonbury Square, up the Holloway Road and Highgate Hill, to the village of Highgate, thence to the Broad Walk on Hampstead Heath, and back to his residence before dinner, when he had no rehearsals on. His rate of walking was never less than at the rate of five miles an hour. This he did to keep his fat down, he said; for he was inclined to corpulency, like several of the male members of his family. By this means he kept himself pretty nearly all his life between eleven and twelve stone in weight. He dined at 2.30, especially when acting; and after dinner he took a nap on the couch from 4 to 5, and then a couple of cups of tea and a cigar. All the liquid he took during the evening, when acting, was a little barley water now and then, just to moisten his mouth. He was never at home to any but the most intimate friends, except by appointment, and it was more than the housemaid's situation was worth to admit a stranger between the hours of 2 and 5 p.m. He spent a great deal of his spare time fishing and shooting. He was a

deft thrower of the fly, and knew nearly every trout stream in England. Nor was he less successful with the gun, and rarely missed being out on the first day of partridge and pheasant shooting for thirty-five years.

“He never went out of his own country till the year 1859, when he took his company to Berlin. He was well received by the Germans, and highly spoken of by many of them. The press said he was equal to their own Iffland and Ludwig Devrient, and private individuals said their superior. In their criticisms they placed his acting of Shakespeare’s four greatest characters in the following order of merit—Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, and Othello. At Berlin he was patronized nightly by the King and Queen, and their son and daughter the Crown Prince and Princess,—the latter our own Princess Royal. After having gone from Berlin to Leipzig and Dresden, he acted at Hamburg on his way home.

“He never went to America, although frequently on the point of concluding an engagement to do so. He was often assured by Americans that he could go through the States with five of his characters, and make sufficient to have retired on. But his early friend, Mrs. Warner’s, description of her tour in 1851 was the main cause of his never attempting it. Besides, he had an objection to being absent from London so long, and she, knowing his temperament well, declared it would have worried him out of his life. Mr. Frederick Robinson, his later friend, on the other hand, who has been there now some twenty years and more, has said he was sure, had Mr. Phelps gone between the years 1860 and 1870, that both he and his acting would have been so thoroughly appreciated that he would have enjoyed the tour rather than otherwise.

"Mr. Phelps once acted five nights at a provincial theatre with Edmund Kean, a fact which has been derided by some, and variously described by others. His nephew distinctly remembers Mr. Phelps telling his father, who was the tragedian's elder brother, that one night, after *The Iron Chest* was concluded, Kean told his secretary to ask the young man who played Wilford to come to him, and on his appearing the great actor said, 'You have played your part well to-night, sir, and if you continue as you have begun, you will one day tread in my shoes.'"

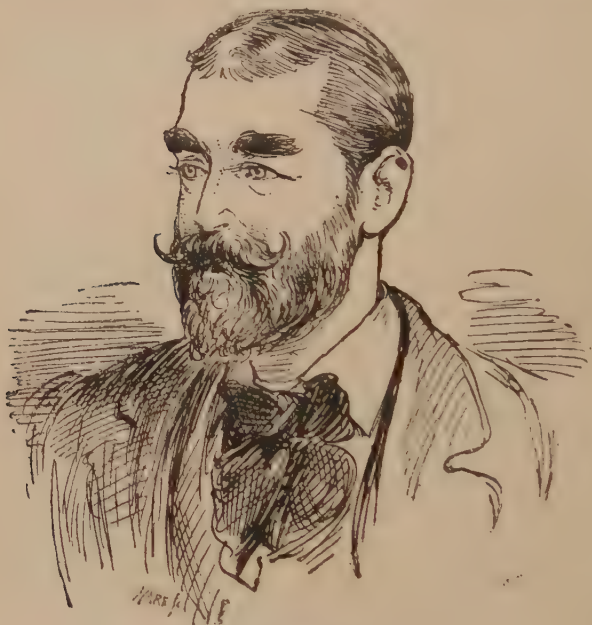
VIII.

"THERE was a very bright *raconteur* at Sadler's Wells, in Charles Fenton, the scene-painter," continues Toole. "Phelps used to go into his room now and then and get him to tell stories.

"Fenton played a small part exceedingly well in *Apple Blossoms*. He used to tell wonderful Jew stories, inconsequent kind of romances. There was one, I remember, about a body that could not be buried underground, or else all the property would go away from the heirs, so they put it on the top of a hill. He used to mix the incidents up in a curious sort of way, and, when there was any point open to doubt, would settle it with the remark, 'That's what they say down at West Hartlepool.' It was one of those inconsequent stories which lead to nothing; but, from the way in which they are told, are often very amusing.

"Burnand has a peculiar knack of making inconsequent speeches; he can talk about nothing in the cleverest way. He once, when we were at a party together in Liverpool, invented a bogus

game of cards. It was at an evening party. Four gentlemen had been playing whist in a very serious, not to say ostentatious, way, and for pretty large stakes. When they went down to supper we took their table, myself, Burnand, and several others. Burnand suggested that we should all put on the table little piles of money, reckoning how much we each contributed, so that we could



MR. F. C. BURNAND.

redistribute it when our bogus game was over. It was understood that during the game we all acquiesced in anything any player did ; that we should deal as many or as few cards as we liked ; and that any player, at an opportune moment, should triumphantly lay down any card and take the stakes, whatever they were, collecting from

each heap besides what there was in the pool. We had about thirty pounds on the table. We were just in the full swing of our fun, invented for the unostentatious whisters, when they came up from supper. They came straight to the table and looked on. Burnand dealt; he gave three cards to some, four to others, and took only two himself. We all looked at our cards very care-



MR. TOOLE IN "ARTFUL CARDS."

fully, and laid each card down with a great show of caution. Burnand, as the dealer, waited until we had all exhausted our cards, when he said triumphantly, 'Oh, indeed; you call for the Three of Hearts; very well, here it is!' upon which we were all very much cast down, and he swept the board; but returned a sovereign to me and ten

shillings to another player, because we were 'fifth and third out.'

"Then I dealt, giving each three cards. We went through the same mystery of care and caution, laid down our cards in a curious way, Burnand putting all his down together, the others playing, as it seemed, all out of turn, and Burnand suddenly crying out—'It's a double Corsican—it's Johnnie's!'

"'Of course it is,' I said, with well-feigned surprise and delight.

"'It's the first time we have had a double Corsican,' said Burnand.

"I quietly took up the pool, and asked for two pounds each in addition.

"We carried the game on for some time with enthusiasm, the lookers-on occasionally asking questions, which we were too busy to answer. At last, I suggested that a little supper would be a good thing; and then Burnand, in an off-hand manner, told the inquiring lookers-on that the game was the new Corsican game of 'Bolo' and 'Catchorka.' They said it seemed a very exciting game. Burnand said it was the *only* game at cards. They said they would like to learn it. He advised them to get Collins's book on it from Longmans; and we went down to supper.

"The fun of the whole thing was the acting of Burnand, his by-play, his asides. We all played up to him with perfect sincerity; and I think the incident gave Burnand more than one suggestion for *Artful Cards*."

IX.

'You were speaking the other day of my first-night friends,' said Toole, as I was pocketing the

sheet of note-paper upon which I had chronicled in hieroglyphics Burnand's merry card-trick. "I must tell you about one of the most regular and devoted of my first-night friends. He is a very pleasant city man, who has a fancy for addressing letters to me with nothing on the envelope but simply 'J. L. Toole, Esq.' I remonstrate with him now and then, but he always very cheerily explains, 'But you get it; you get it, my boy.'

" 'Yes,' I say, 'but don't you think it is putting the Post Office to trouble?'

" 'Not a bit. That's fame, you see. J. L. Toole is quite enough for the Post Office.'

"I suggested to him the other day that the best test would be to put a £100 note into it: and that reminds me of Planché's story of Sheridan Knowles. He was acting in the country, and received an urgent, anxious letter from Mrs. Knowles, informing him that two hundred pounds which he had promised to send her on a certain day had never reached her. Knowles thereupon wrote a very angry letter to Sir Francis Freeling, who was then Postmaster-General, informing him that on such a day, and at such an hour, and at such a post-office, he posted a letter containing two hundred pounds in Bank of England notes addressed to Mrs. Knowles, which had never arrived at its destination. He denounced the Post Office authorities in strong terms, and demanded an immediate inquiry into the matter, the delivery of the money to his wife, and an apology for its detention.

"Sir Francis, in reply, wrote him a very pleasant letter, as if they were perfect strangers to each other, which they were not, telling him that he had received so much pleasure from his published works that he looked upon him as a friend, and at the same time acknowledged that Knowles was

quite correct in stating that he had posted the letter in question containing the bank-notes; but that he had omitted not only his signature inside but all address outside the letter, having sealed up the notes in an envelope with the words, 'I send you the money,' which he had posted without any direction. The letter was opened at the chief office, and detained until inquiry should be made. Sir Francis finished by informing him that by the time he received this letter the money would be in Mrs. Knowles's hands; the Post Office had sent it by special messenger.

"Knowles, who had begun his complaint to Sir Francis with a severe 'Sir,' wrote back "My dear Sir,—You are right, and I am wrong. God bless you! I will call upon you when I come to town."

"A curious, absent-minded man, Knowles. Meeting a friend, he said, 'Ah, my dear fellow, Abbott, I am off to-morrow: can I take any letters for you?'

"'You are very kind,' said Abbott; 'but where are you going to?'

"'I haven't made up my mind,' replied Knowles.

"On another occasion, seeing Mr. O. Smith, a well-known actor, on the other side of the Strand, Knowles rushed over to him, shook hands with him, and inquired after his health.

"Smith had no personal acquaintance with Knowles, but knew him by sight.

"'Thank you, Mr. Knowles, very much,' he said; 'but you are mistaken, I am O. Smith.'

"'I beg you ten thousand pardons,' said Knowles; 'I took you for your namesake, T. P. Cooke.'"

X.

"AND now, what about our trip to the North? This is Wednesday; we will go quietly down to York on Saturday."

"I have collected the English and American press reports relating to your American tour," I said; "you shall give me your 'Impressions of America' to-morrow, and then 'we'll up and away for the North Country.'"

"Very well," he said, with a pretence of energy that for a moment deceived me, "let us finish the American business right off."

"Not to-night," I said. "I will come again to-morrow."

"Had you there!" he exclaimed. "I've tired you to-day as much as you have tired me."

"I hope we shall not tire the reader," I said, closing my note-book.

IX.

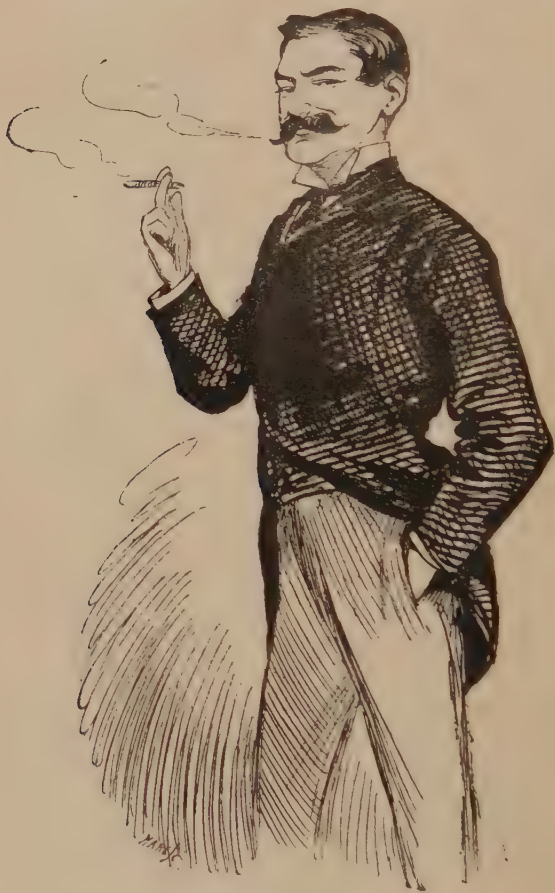
NOTABLE BANQUETS.

Mr. Toole's American Tour—"Why Lord Rosebery?"—Byron and Charles Mathews—A memorable night—A message from the Prince of Wales—"Success and Long Life to Mr. Toole"—Lord Rosebery's speech—Mr. Toole's reply—What Charles Mathews said—Farewell Dinner at Birmingham—George Dawson on the Stage—Mr. Toole on George Dawson—The Church and the Stage.

I.

"THE dinner that was given to me on the eve of my departure for America, is particularly interesting just now, when Lord Rosebery has won a

prominent position in the councils of his country, and is a leader among the great parties in the state ; for he was the chairman, and made on that occasion, perhaps, his first notable speech at a



MR. HENRY J. BYRON.

public banquet. When he was invited to preside, and kindly consented to do so, some people asked 'Why Lord Rosebery?' But some people did not know what stuff there was in the young noble-

man, and many of the best-informed guests on the occasion were agreeably surprised and delighted with him. He had evidently himself heard a hint of the suggestion, 'Why Lord Rosebery?' because, in the course of his most eloquent and generous address, he gave the company his own views upon the subject. 'I have been probably selected to fill the chair,' he said, 'because I have paid, possibly, more money to see Mr. Toole act than any one of those present.'

"An incident in the evening which amused me very much was the pointed way in which Charles Mathews fired off at poor Byron some of his humorous criticisms about authors. It happened that Byron had just risen from his seat at the moment when Mathews jocularly spoke of the unimportance of the author of a play. 'People don't go to a theatre because So-and-so has written the piece. An author is all very well to sit about and to talk with, but he isn't of any particular importance; and in Mr. Toole's case it isn't the piece at all—it's the actor.' Mathews nodded at Byron. Byron smiled, and joined in the applause of the speech as it went on.¹

¹ "By the death of Mr. Henry J. Byron, which took place last Friday evening at his residence, in Clapham, the literature of the contemporary British stage is suddenly, if not altogether unexpectedly, bereft of one of its most prolific, versatile, and diverting contributors. As a dramatic author Mr. Byron, for several years in succession, occupied an exceptional, and in some respects unprecedented, position with relation to the metropolitan and provincial stage, his works being in such general request among managers, and standing so high in public favour, that comedies, farces, and burlesques from his fertile and facile pen were being performed at one and the same time in several leading London theatres and in well-nigh every country town of considerable importance. Whilst producing play after play with a rapidity that appeared little less than marvellous, he was contributing copiously to the lighter

“It will always be to me a most memorable night. I never think of it but with pride and pleasure, except when I think of it with regret for some of the dear fellows who were present and whom we shall see no more.

“A few days afterwards I received a similar compliment—on a smaller scale, of course, but none the less very welcome for the kindly spirit of it—at Birmingham, my dear friend, George

periodical literature of the day, and not infrequently impersonating on the boards one or another of the characters that were the offspring of his lively imagination. His humour was quaint, dry, and somewhat caustic, holding, as a rule, the happy mean between mere catching obviousness and that supersubtlety which compels the hearer of a joke to think seriously before he can permit himself to laugh heartily. As a punster, Mr. Byron had few equals, if any, throughout the period of his greatest productiveness, when his entertaining burlesques of popular operas and dramas kept crowded audiences nightly in roars of laughter at the Strand, Prince of Wales's, Adelphi, and Olympic theatres. His word-plays, always ingenious, were now and anon so far-fetched as to convey the impression that they had been thought and wrought out with extraordinary pains; but those who knew him best, and enjoyed the most frequent opportunities of appreciating his rare conversational gifts, can bear witness that jests of no ordinary intricacy fell from his lips with a spontaneity every whit as manifest as that which characterized his quiet, saturnine utterance of simpler and more self-suggested funniments. With respect to his dramatic works of all categories, it is especially noteworthy—greatly to the honour of the deceased—that their morality was irreproachable. Henry Byron was as pure a writer as the late Charles Dickens himself. His plots were never founded upon incidents arising from or leading up to violations of the marriage vow; his dialogue was refreshingly free from those unsavoury allusions conventionally designated as *double entendres*, and from the faintest suggestion of indelicacy. He often made his *dramatis personæ* indulge in severe interchanges of chaff that was nothing if not personal; but coarse vulgarity and indecorous innuendo were inflexibly tabooed from every speech spoken by the children of his fancy or indited by his pen for the amusement of the reading public.—*Daily Telegraph*, April 14th, 1884.

Dawson—now, alas ! only a memory, but a very sweet and tender one—occupying the chair.”

II.

THE London banquet above referred to took place on the 24th of June, 1874, at Willis's Rooms, under the best and brightest auspices. “The original idea,” says the *Era*, “of a few friends inviting Mr. J. L. Toole to a dinner, that he might receive formal expression of the good wishes which would accompany him on his professional tour through America, was so warmly and enthusiastically encouraged, wherever it was mentioned, that it became necessary to enlarge the modest proposition at first privately made to a plan of much more extensive proportions.” The tickets were a guinea and a half each, and were so rapidly taken up that many of the later applicants found it impossible to obtain seats.

The executive committee, whose arrangements were much commended during the evening, were Messrs. Charles Dickens, jun., chairman ; Morley D. Longden, secretary ; Peter Berlyn, Charles Coote, John Drew, John Hollingshead, Albert Levy, Charles Shaw, H. J. Montagu, Captain Styán, C. F. Pinches, William Tinsley, Thomas J. Thompson, and J. C. Pawle.

“The choice of the Earl of Rosebery,” remarks the *Era*, “for president, was the happiest that could be made ; and the force and fluency of his speeches, associated with a most winning mode of delivery, called forth the warmest expressions of admiration. Nothing, indeed, was wanting to make the event memorable in the history of the Stage as a splendid acknowledgment of the dignity of the dramatic art.”

In proposing the toast of “The Prince and

Princess of Wales," the Chairman said :—" Their Royal Highnesses, as is well known, take a warm interest in everything that is English ; and I venture to say that there is nothing so English as the drama. (Hear, hear.) But on the present occasion I have a special message to convey from the Prince of Wales, saying how heartily he hopes that our guest may have a prosperous journey to America—(applause)—that no one is more in-



LORD ROSEBERY.

terested than himself in Mr. Toole's success in that new field ; and that he wishes for himself a prosperous and speedy return of our guest back to his native country."

Lord Rosebery, in proposing the toast of the evening, "Success and Long Life to Mr. Toole," said :—" Gentlemen, if ever there was an occasion for a bumper toast, it is the one I am about to propose to you. I have often observed at dinners

like the present that, when the viands are good, the company good, and the speeches short, much enjoyment is derived by everybody except two persons, and they are the two persons, one of whom has to propose and the other to acknowledge what is called the toast of the evening. On this occasion there is only one exception, because—although I feel at this moment that my knees have refused their natural office, and are more like a pair of castanets than a pair of human supports—I am well aware that I shall be followed by an orator who is known to us all, and to every audience in the United Kingdom. (Applause.) I suppose, gentlemen, that there is not one of us here who has not had the advantage, more than once, of hearing those perplexing orations which Mr. Toole is in the habit of delivering—(laughter)—sublime in execution, yet so complicated and so mysterious—(loud laughter)—in their delivery, that they have often reminded me of what after-dinner speeches of Shakspeare's may have been, if we can only imagine that the immortal William was exceedingly drunk at the time. (Laughter.) Well, gentlemen, I have administered to myself the freest dose of compassion for having to propose this illustrious toast this evening, and it has been a problem with me ever since I was asked to fulfil this responsible position why that honour was conferred upon me. A solution of the problem, which has only reached me by a side wind, is that reliable statistics have proved that no young man of my age has ever spent so much money in stalls to see Mr. Toole as I have. (Great applause and laughter.) Gentlemen, that is a reason, and a valid reason; because, when I alluded to his speeches a moment ago, I did not mention them with a view to that Parliamentary success which, I regret to say, has not, on my

part, been achieved. I used attentively to attend Mr. Toole's performances, and I have only to mention as a drawback to those who may feel inclined to follow my example, that though you could have heard a pin drop in the house, and though I had read Mill's 'Logic' for hours and hours before going to the theatre, yet when I returned home and attempted to draw up an abstract of the speech I had heard, it was not so clear—(laughter)—or so logical as I should have expected from so eminent a man. (Renewed laughter.) There were brilliant epigrams, and brilliant metaphors, no doubt, but when you came to put epigrams and metaphors together, according to the rules of Mill and Aldrich, you found there was the third premise wanting, which no human ingenuity could supply. (Laughter.) Well, gentlemen, there is another reason why, perhaps, I was chosen chairman on this occasion, and that is on account of a local feeling that I have. I come from the neighbourhood of Edinburgh and I am proud to say, on behalf of Edinburgh, that I believe in that place—in that city—Mr. Toole's first successes were won; and Edinburgh, I can testify to it, is at this moment an attentive witness of his triumph. Well, gentlemen, if I was to proceed to find fault with the chairman of the dinner, I could do so in a very few words. I must say that it is impossible that I can do justice to my admirable and honoured friend in any after remarks I may now choose to make. Steadfast and true as has been his character in every walk of private life, his public career has been so various and so complex that one cannot touch upon all the incidents in one evening's sitting. I should like to see a series of banquets given day after day in his honour until we had exhausted all the various phases of his character. Still, although that might

redound to his immortal glory, I am doubtful whether it would not result in his precipitate death from indigestion. (Laughter.) I should like to see a banquet on the first day at which the Lord Chancellor should preside, and at which the Judges and the Bar of England should be present, to give their professional and legal opinion as to the merits of 'Mr. Hammond Coote' and 'Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz.' (Laughter.) On the second evening I should like to have a dinner over which Admiral Rous should be the chairman, and George Fordham the croupier, and they should give an opinion as to the merits of Mr. Toole in the pig-skin (laughter): and on the third occasion I should like to have light refreshment, with the members of both houses of Convocation, the entire bench of Bishops, and the great clerical dignitaries present, to dilate upon the manner in which Mr. Toole had reformed the rogue 'Don Giovanni' by transforming him into a pusillanimous and harmless young man. (Renewed laughter.) Well, gentlemen, I am not a dramatic critic, but I can give you in a very few words the result of my experience. I have often been to see Mr. Toole, as I said before, and whenever I have been to see him I have always entered the house with a feeling of discontent, grumbling to myself that I was perfectly certain he would not be so good as he was the last time I saw him, but I have always left the house with the feeling that I had never seen him half so good in my life. I cannot account for that. Then there is another feeling which has been felt by every human being who has seen him, whether in town or the provinces, that whenever he has seen Mr. Toole he has not only spent a delightful evening, that he has not only seen an actor of undeniable talent, but that he has met an admirable friend, because there is a geniality about

his performance which spreads an electric chain round about his audience, and makes them forget the actor in the friend. (Applause.) Gentlemen, you will read in the third volume of a book recently published a very curious account of how an illustrious man who has passed away from us but recently—I mean the late Charles Dickens—went down to Walworth at some personal inconvenience to see the beginning of a new actor. Dickens admitted that he showed some promise, and he wished to encourage him by his presence and patronage, and that actor, gentlemen, was our guest of this evening. (Cheers.) I cannot help thinking that, if that great genius, Dickens, were able to revisit for a day the scene of his early triumphs, he would think it not the least of his successes in this world that he had introduced us partially to an actor who had been the means of evoking so much happiness and so much sympathy in this country. (Cheers.) We have seen the beginning, but we have not seen the end. We see here a man who has not yet reached the summit of his prosperous career. Well, gentlemen, I will not intrude upon you any longer with my remarks. I have to arraign Mr. Toole on three counts, but I will not interpose longer than I can help between the jury and the counsel for the defence. I have to arraign him on the possession of admirable talents. (Applause.) I have to arraign him also on having conferred more happiness upon his fellow-men, probably, than any human being in this room; of having made us all his friends, and of possessing the irresistible power of creative sympathy. I have only one word more to say, and that is an allusion to an anecdote that I heard of our guest only the other day. He was told that a few friends would like to give him a dinner before he went to America. To which

our illustrious guest replied in a manner that I am perfectly certain you can all figure to yourselves, though I cannot imitate it, 'Why do they want to give me a dinner? I am not in the least hungry.' (Laughter.) I can understand that remark if Mr. Toole's appetite was one for public applause, because it must have been long ago satisfied. But I should like to tell him, in the presence of this company, why it is we have given him this dinner to-night. We have given it to you, Mr. Toole, because we appreciate the humour which is always genial, and which is always pure (cheers), because we are grateful to you for the many happy evenings we have spent in your presence; because we feel that that humour is one which is grateful alike to age, and to youth, and to childhood—to the genius and to the fool, to every class and variety and condition of life. We might have felt this equally, and simply waited for stalls to go and realize it in our own persons; but we wished further to give you this dinner because we feel that we are about to lose you. We are about to lose one who is a household delight of England, and has done more to charm the nation than probably any one man now living; and, to paraphrase a famous writer, the harmless gaiety of nations is about for the time to be eclipsed. If we have to spare you at all we would rather spare you to our cousins across the Atlantic than to any other nation upon earth. (Applause.) It would be difficult for any Englishman to obtain a cold welcome in America. (Cheers.) What we have to fear for you is not that cold welcome, but that American enthusiasm may induce you for a moment to forget English applause; and we can only express the hope—and what cheers and repays the encouragement of that hope will be the greatest reward you can give us for our homage to-night

—we can only express the hope that American enthusiasm will not make you forget English devotion of many years, and that though you may leave your new acquaintances with reluctance—and I have no doubt you will—you will return to this old country with some pleasure, remembering that you leave here a nation of friends, to whom we trust you may be spared for many years to afford new delight. (Applause.) I will now only ask the company to drink your very good health, and may God speed you on a happy and prosperous voyage.” (Great cheering.)

Mr. Toole then rose to reply, and on doing so the whole company also rose, cheered, and waved their handkerchiefs. This lasted for some minutes. When the company had resumed their seats, Mr. Toole said :—“ My Lord Rosebery and Gentlemen. When I look around upon this brilliant company of men, eminent in science, literature, and art—men whose names are known wherever the English language is spoken, and find myself the guest of so distinguished an assembly, and with your lordship’s generous and flattering words, together with the gracious message of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales fresh in my ears, I fear lest I should fail to convey the deep sense of gratitude I must ever entertain for the honour conferred upon me to-night. You will, I am sure, forgive me if I add that with my gratitude there is associated no small amount of honest pride, because in the compliment now paid to me I recognize the estimation in which you hold the profession to which I have the honour to belong. While I desire thus publicly and emphatically to acknowledge the kind and generous appreciation that has been extended to me throughout my career, I trust that I shall ever continue to be guided by that principle which I have endeavoured

to adopt as the rule of my professional life—faithfulness in my calling as a servant of the public. And suffer me here, also, in a single word, to refer to those happy relations it has ever been my good fortune to maintain with my professional brethren—or shall I say my playmates? Remembering, as I now do, the years of pleasant association with them, I wish, on this, to me memorable, occasion, when I am parting from them for a time, to express the hope that the bond of mutual kindly feeling which has so long existed between us may remain unbroken. Nor must I forget to acknowledge with like gratitude those other equally dear, if more private, relations that may exist between friends of years, so many of whom I recognize here to-night, uniting in that tribute of affectionate regard of which I am so deeply sensible. Some of these friends who see my hands full of home work, have expressed surprise at my quitting England, even for a time. To those friends I have said, what I would now repeat here, that various motives induce me to cross the Atlantic. First and strongest, I frankly admit, is the ambition to win, as an English actor, the approbation of the American playgoing public. The New World has sent to us artists of the highest rank and reputation, ladies and gentlemen who have deservedly achieved distinction in their art. For instance, Miss Cushman, Miss Bateman, Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Sothorn, Mr. Owens, Mr. Davenport, Mr. John Brougham, Mr. Edwin Booth, Barney Williams, and many others. Now, if in return I am able to contribute in the smallest degree to the amusement of our American cousins, I shall be well contented. Again, while desirous of avoiding anything like a gloomy view of my visit, I shall yet hope, on my return, to be able to render a good dollarous—(laughter and

applause)—account. It has been my happy lot to be singularly blessed with the best of health, through which inestimable blessing, during a period of twenty years, I have been enabled to fulfil every performance for which I have been announced, and for which I am truly grateful. On one occasion I was nearly not doing so from a sudden attack of gout, and I sent word to the theatre I was placed *hors de combat*. While I was debating how it was possible for me to go through the performance the manager arrived, and he hobbled into my room, saying I must come down to the theatre at all hazards. He had the gout, and persuaded me it was better for all of us to 'gout' (go out) together, which we did. (Laughter and applause.) I performed that evening, and was highly complimented on the thoughtful, cautious manner in which I ascended the steps of Uncle Dick's cart. (Laughter.) All this occupation has, of course, made my holidays very occasional ones. When I have had them, my delight has been to spend them at the theatre as an auditor. Two of these occasions have occurred during my last season in London, which I remember with great pleasure. The first was spent in the stalls of the Gaiety Theatre, in witnessing the ever-fresh, polished, and exquisite acting of my old—though ever young—friend, Charles Mathews—(loud cheers)—the second time I went to the Lyceum, and wept over the woes of 'Charles the First,' so admirably and artistically portrayed by my good friend Henry Irving—(loud cheers)—and the enjoyment I experienced on both those occasions gave me a longing desire for more holidays. But, my Lord Rosebery and gentlemen, I must not further occupy your time, for however ready I may be in giving utterance to the words of others, I feel my power of expression on such

an occasion as this to be very feeble indeed. Once more I thank you heartily—very, very heartily. That your good wishes go with me I know ; that my earnest gratitude is yours you will, I am sure, believe. Deeply and sincerely I thank you, one and all, for the high and flattering compliment you have been pleased to pay me to-night, a compliment which will never quit my memory, however sorely it may be tried—a compliment which will ever mark one of the pleasantest episodes in my not altogether uneventful life. Permit me, then, my lord and gentlemen, with a heart more full than the glass I now hold, to drink to your hearty good health, and your greatest happiness.”

The conclusion of this speech was the signal for another loud and prolonged outburst of applause.

Mr. Douglas Straight proposed “Literature and Art,” to which Mr. Edmund Yates replied for “Literature,” and Mr. W. R. Frith, R.A., for “Art.” Mr. E. J. Reed gave “The Health of the Chairman,” who, having responded, called upon Mr. Charles Mathews to propose “The Drama.”

Mr. Mathews said:—“My Lord and Gentlemen, I really consider that I have been called upon very suddenly for this toast. I certainly thought that if I had been required to speak you would have had a song first in order to give me time to prepare. My extemporaneous speeches are always the better for a little preparation. (Laughter.) I finished work last night, and I thought I was going to enjoy myself here as a private gentleman this evening, but it seems to me that I am not to be permitted to do so. I am called upon to propose ‘The Drama,’ though why I should be called upon to propose it I do not know. Certainly, I have been acquainted with the drama for some years—(laughter)—a sort of distant connection—a sort of bowing acquaintance

—but really I cannot do justice to its beauties. I should just as soon think of raking up the ashes of my deceased grandfather for the purpose of invoking his aid. Besides, I do not see what the drama has to do with Mr. Toole's success in America. (Laughter.) It is not the drama that is going to America; it is Mr. Toole—(laughter)—and I have heard several gentlemen say all his pieces have been played to death in America. That is the greatest mistake. Mr. Toole will bring them to life again. The people do not go to the theatre to see the pieces; they go to see Mr. Toole. He is the speciality, the type. They do not care about the author any more than does Mr. Toole himself. (Cheers and laughter.) And I advise Mr. Toole, although he has quoted Shakspeare this evening, not to follow it up by coming out in Shaksperian drama in America. Perhaps they might expect to have the right words, though if Mr. Toole did give them Shakspeare according to Toole they might not find it out, for a great many people talk of Shakspeare who have not read him. (Cheers.) However, I can tell Mr. Toole he will have a jolly time of it, and I wish I was going with him. I will now address myself to him personally. If you stop too long, who knows but that I may take up some of your parts? (Laughter.) That you will see when you come back. I certainly shall not take to the Shaksperian drama. During the last forty years I do not think I have read forty lines of blank verse, and I do not suppose I shall for the next forty years. I think we had better connect this toast with the American drama, and then he can tell them out there that we did so, and they will say, 'Bravo, Toole.' (Laughter.) You know we have one drama coming out now by an American author, Dion Boucicault. (Great laughter.) As Mr.

Benjamin Webster has slipped out of harness, I will connect this toast with the name of Mr. Creswick.”² (Cheers.)

² Mr. William Creswick died on Sunday, June 17th, 1888, at his residence, The Terrace, Kennington Park, London. The following details of his career are compiled from the *Era* and other authorities:—“Born on the 27th of December, 1813, in the vicinity of Covent Garden, Mr. Creswick was in the habit of seeing as a boy the most eminent performers attached to the neighbouring theatres. Although educated for a mercantile pursuit, he soon evinced a decided predilection for the stage. At the age of seventeen his home was broken up by the death of his father, and he felt free to follow his inclinations. In the summer of 1831 he accepted an engagement at a small theatre in the Commercial Road, of which Amherst, of Astley’s, was manager. Here was produced a drama founded on the murder of the Italian boy ‘burked’ for purposes of dissection, and, under the name of Master Collins, the youthful actor impersonated the victim of the atrocious crime, which was then creating a painful sensation throughout the country. Soon after he joined a small company of players in Suffolk, with whom he remained two years, and afterwards rose to a better position in the Kentish circuit of Mr. John Sloman. In 1834 he was playing leading business in Downe’s well-managed York circuit, where he met Miss Paget, of the Olympic Theatre, destined to become Mrs. Creswick; whilst the company also included Henry Compton, John Ryder, and Harry Widdicomb, all then in their novitiate. Returning to London, Mr. Creswick made his first prominent appearance, February 16th, 1835, as ‘Horace Meredith,’ in Jerrold’s comedy of *The School-fellows*, at the old Queen’s Theatre, in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, placed at the time under the management of Mrs. Nisbett. Going back to York circuit, Mr. Creswick embodied the leading part in Talfourd’s tragedy of *Ion*, then played in the provinces for the first time. In April, 1839, the Lyceum was opened by Mr. Penley, a provincial manager, with three new pieces—a drama called *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, of which Mrs. Stirling was the heroine, a farce called *Dark Deeds*, and a melodrama entitled *The Silver Crescent*, of which Mr. Edward Stirling was the author. In the course of a few nights the manager hit upon the odd expedient of throwing open the stage to the audience at the end of the second piece and giving a promenade concert. Every effort, however, proved fruitless, the season abruptly concluded after a fortnight, and an excellent company, which included Mr. Creswick, was suddenly dispersed, as they declined to

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continue on the sharing system. Mr. Creswick then made a professional tour through America and Canada, where he remained nearly four years, greatly increasing his reputation. Returning to England, he played as a tragedian at Newcastle-on-Tyne, Liverpool, and Birmingham; finally, in July, 1846, joining Mr. Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells, where he made his first appearance as 'Hotspur' in *Henry IV.* In April, 1847, when Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler reappeared on the stage at the Princess's, Mr. Creswick was engaged to support her, and he then played with Macready, who was giving a series of farewell performances previous to his departure for America. This was followed by a three years' engagement at the Haymarket, where he opened as 'Claude' to the 'Pauline' of Miss Helen Faucit. In the autumn of 1849 Mr. Creswick joined Mr. Shepherd in the management of the Surrey, opening as 'Alasco' in Sheridan Knowles's play of *The Rose of Arragon*, and for three years afterwards playing a round of Shaksperian characters. In September, 1866, Mr. Shepherd had again a partnership with Mr. Creswick at the Surrey, and the T. P. Cooke prize drama *True to the Core*, in which Mr. Creswick played 'Martin Truegold,' was produced on the opening night of the season. A second visit was paid to America in 1871, when he acted at Boston with Charlotte Cushman and Edwin Booth. Returning to England, Mr. Creswick appeared with Samuel Phelps at Drury Lane Theatre, and remained some time. A benefit performance was given him at the Gaiety in May, 1877, when he played 'Macbeth,' and shortly afterwards left for Australia, where he was enthusiastically welcomed. Returning from his triumphant tour, Mr. Creswick reappeared at the Surrey in his favourite character of 'Virginius,' and played starring engagements at the Standard and other theatres. In November, 1882, he took a 'Jubilee Benefit,' under the auspices of Mr. Henry Irving, at the Lyceum Theatre; and on October 29th, 1885, a complimentary benefit was given to the esteemed actor at Drury Lane Theatre, when he appeared in a scene from *King Lear* (act i. scene 3), and took his farewell of the stage.

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 Peter Berlyn, Esq.
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 W. S. Gilbert, Esq.
 F. Herbert, Esq.
 C. Harris, Esq.
 Dr. Harper.

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 C. J. Mathews, Esq.
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 Frank Marshall, Esq.
 Isaac Mead, Esq.
 John Oxenford, Esq.
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 J. C. Pawle, Esq.
 George Perren, Esq.
 G. F. Pinches, Esq.
 C. F. Partington, Esq.
 H. B. Pritchard, Esq.
 G. Painter, Esq.
 Dr. R. Quain, F.R.S.
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 Robert Reece, Esq.
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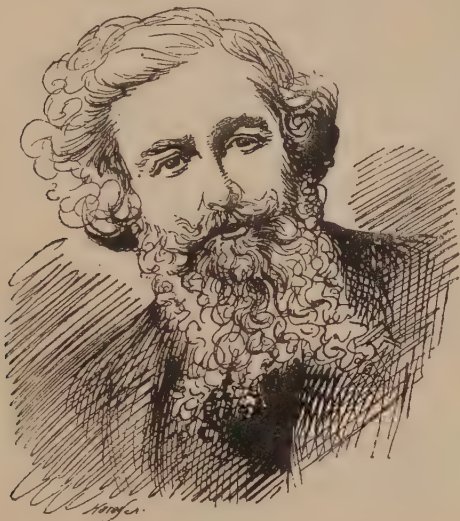
Douglas Straight, Esq.	T. J. Thompson, Esq.
Charles Shaw, Esq.	Frank F. Toole, Esq.
J. Ashby Sterry, Esq.	F. C. Toole, Esq.
J. Early Smith, Esq.	J. L. Toole, jun., Esq.
J. Smith, Esq.	E. Trimmer, Esq.
J. Saunders, Esq.	Thomas Thorne, Esq.
Reeves Smith, Esq.	E. J. Tomson, Esq.
Samuel L. Schuster, Esq.	James Vicars, Esq.
Rev. F. F. Statham, B.A.	Benjamin Webster, Esq.
Arthur Stirling, Esq.	Alfred Wigan, Esq.
Rev. Dr. Tisdale.	W. T. Wrighton, Esq.
E. W. Tritton, Esq.	Hon. L. Wingfield.
J. Taylor, Esq.	Alderman Sir T. White.
W. Tinsley, Esq.	T. Webb, Esq.
A. Thompson, Esq.	Edmund Yates, Esq.

III.

THE farewell dinner given to Mr. Toole at Birmingham took place at the Great Western Hotel, Mr. George Dawson³ presiding; Mr. Samuel Tim-

George Dawson, lecturer, preacher, and journalist, was born in St. Pancras, London, 1821, but lived most of his life in Birmingham, where he was deservedly esteemed as an honest and earnest social and political reformer. He took the degree of M.A. at the University of Glasgow, and was intended for the ministry of the Baptist Nonconformists. In this capacity he became minister of Mount Zion Chapel at Birmingham. "The peculiarities of his ministrations," says a brief biography in "Men of the Time" for 1872, "and chiefly a disregard of the merely conventional usages of the sacred office, alienated from him a portion of the congregation of Mount Zion Chapel, and a separation took place, when the majority seceded with the minister. A subscription was immediately commenced for the erection of a new chapel for Mr. Dawson, and in 1847 the edifice was opened as the Church of the Saviour. Mr. Dawson did not advocate peculiarities of doctrine, but rather made an earnest desire for truth, and a life of obedience to God and charity to man, the great test of a Christian spirit." Mr. Dawson was an intimate friend of Mr. Henry Barnett, who for some years was the preacher at Finsbury Chapel (succeeding Mr. Fox, M.P.), and at the same time editor of the *Sunday Times*, Barnett being a Conservative in politics and Dawson a Liberal. Mr. Dawson was better known as a lecturer than as a preacher, and since his death many of his public addresses have been published

mins occupying the vice-chair. Sixty friends and admirers of the popular comedian were present, including Alderman Biggs, Alderman Cornforth,



MR. GEORGE DAWSON.

Councillor Barrett, Dr. Wade, Major Gem, Capt. Bullock, Dr. Suffield, Messrs. Mercer, Simpson, James Rodgers, Yeoville Thomason, J. Harding,

in one or two volumes, admirable examples of literary and oratorical art. He wrote for the *Birmingham Daily Press*, a journal of which he was part proprietor, and in which enterprise he lost money. He was not fortunate in his journalistic career. He started the *Birmingham Morning News*, which, in spite of his strong hand in the editorial columns, did not make its way financially. In this instance the capitalist was a wealthy Manchester man. Mr. Dawson for many years took an active part in the public life of Birmingham, was a member of the School Board, delivered inaugural addresses at the beginnings of several public institutions, took great interest in the foundation of the Free Reference and the Shakspeare Libraries, and was beloved of all classes in the Midland metropolis, where a public monument has been erected to his memory.

G. Wilkinson, E. Pickering, W. Lyndon, Thomas Ingram, F. Badham, Baron Clive, R. Free, J. Machin, H. Bennett, T. N. Brown, W. H. Ward, J. Hollingsworth, J. Ward, G. Loveday, R. Best, J. Knight, R. Thomas, G. Baker, J. Lampard, W. Latham, Oscar Pollock, &c., &c. The arrangements for the dinner were admirably carried out by the committee, Messrs. W. J. Ward, J. Rodgers, and J. Hollingsworth.

The Chairman, proposing the toast of the evening, "Our Guest," said:—"Before I propose the toast which it is my honour and pleasure to propose, I have to say that some gentlemen, who appear to have been at Willis's Rooms on a recent occasion, telegraph: 'London fills yet another sparkling bumper, asking, as a postscript from Willis's, to unite with Birmingham at five o'clock in hearty good wishes to the Prince of Wales of comedians, the amiable chairman, his virtuous vice, and to the fraternal company all round. Hoping all are in a merry key, JOHN BULL, No. 1, London.' (Laughter.) I propose the health of our guest—(applause)—and in doing so I have a great deal of pleasure, because there are foolish people who are willing to be amused and are willing to forget those who amuse them. That is a form of ingratitude of which I am not capable. If a man who made a doll for my little child were to come to me and say he was the dollmaker to my little child, I should honour him much for having given innocent pleasure to an innocent child; and if, later on—when pleasure is harder to be got, and therefore the more precious, because of its scarcity and difficulty—if there is a man who can give any number of us innocent pleasure and intellectual gratification, he deserves thanks and honour, and I have often felt very indignant at those who go to be entertained and amused, and then go away and

slight those who have entertained and amused them. (Applause.) If I were ashamed to be president here to-day, I should be ashamed to have ever laughed at Mr. Toole. (Hear, hear.) He has conquered my habitual gravity more than once—(laughter)—and put my solemnity to rout in the most shameless manner. I feel indebted to him for doing so, and I am glad of this humble means of in part paying the debt I owe him. Were I given to require the shelter of great names for what I do, I need hardly tell you we could put our fingers on numbers, but I will only refer to Samuel Johnson, who, respecting Garrick, formerly his pupil, wrote one of the sweetest of all epitaphs—‘The death of Garrick has eclipsed the gaiety of nations.’ If I were to say—not the death—but the partial retirement of Mr. Toole had eclipsed the gaiety of nations I should err, for he goes to conquer the gravity of another nation as he has conquered the gravity of this. (Applause.) I have no doubt he will have as much success there as he has had here. (Hear, hear.) I would not retail his little point, nor do I wish to spoil his little joke; but I do hope that his ‘dollarous campaign’ on the other side of the water may be equal to his ‘sovereign progress’ in this country. (Laughter and applause.) I have to congratulate Mr. Toole upon his courage. I know he is not one of those rash mortals who would go to sea if nobody had been before. (Laughter.) I know it is his weak point; he confesses it, and I hope he will have a very quiet passage, as I am certain he will have a very hearty welcome. (Hear, hear.) And should he be prostrate, he must comfort himself with the thought of the hearty friends he has left behind and is about to make, and I have this pleasure to hold out to him, that very soon after he lands in New York he and I have agreed to

dine together—(hear, hear)—and then I shall be able to administer any ghostly consolation of which he may stand in need. (Laughter.) I need not say we go on different errands; but we go very much in the same spirit. (Applause.) And if our going, humble people as we are—if we should do anything, even by one thread, to knit together these two great nations—for it must be remembered when Gulliver was bound in Lilliput, each thread was a very flimsy one, but the great multitude of them made them strong—therefore, however fine the line we may spin, we may hope that the many which have been, and the many which will be, may help to prevent the greatest of all possible scandals, the saddest of all possible injuries—discord between the two great nations which speak the same tongue. (Applause.) No doubt Mr. Toole will find, as I shall, that it seems a very strange thing to be in another country where our own tongue is spoken. Mr. Toole speaks French like a native—(laughter)—of France—(renewed laughter)—but the strangeness of being in a country politically different, but where the language spoken is the same as our own, will give him and myself a more interesting view of the history of the last hundred years. I shall be able to tell you how he behaves himself, and he will be able to report upon me—(laughter)—though I am afraid I shall go to see him far oftener than he will come to see me. In saying this I mean no reproach, for I have seen Mr. Toole on Sunday—to use an old phrase—‘sitting under me.’ (Laughter.) I have seen him reverent, devout, and attentive, and I have sometimes thought I have done him some little good. I know he has done me a great deal of good, for he has made me enjoy the quainter scenes of one side of human nature, and I hope I have done something to show

how deeply rooted to the greater and nobler part of human nature are those things he deals in. (Hear, hear.) I wish him great success. We know he will not desert the country of his birth, or become a naturalized citizen of America, but will come back, and we shall have, I hope, the pleasure of welcoming him. (Hear, hear.) I propose that we drink very heartily his health. We drink it not only because he is an artist, but because he is—as I have known him—in private life an upright, honourable, hospitable, generous, merciful, and kindly man. (Applause.) These things I know, and therefore, when I propose his health, he knows, and some of you know, that it is not a mere matter of form; I do it with all my heart, he being as honourable a man as a private gentleman as he is admirable artist as an actor." (Loud applause.)

The toast having been enthusiastically honoured, Mr. Toole said :—" I thank you very much and very heartily for the very kind way in which you have responded to the toast so kindly proposed by my friend Mr. Dawson. I am a very poor speaker—(laughter)—but I may say I esteem this meeting a very high compliment. It is the last before I go, and I appreciate it the more because of the sacrifice which some of the gentlemen present have had to make to be present on a Saturday afternoon. However, you have kindly considered my professional duties, and I thank you heartily. I was once very severely rebuked by an old lady who was interviewing—that is an Americanism, I suppose I must get used to Americanism—(laughter)—who was interviewing my wife at a party. She asked my wife whether she went to the theatre. 'Yes, when there is a new piece on,' replied she. 'I suppose your husband goes,' said the old lady. 'Oh, yes, he

goes every evening,' replied my wife. 'Lord bless me, how gay he must be!' said the horrified old lady. (Laughter.) It is very gratifying to me to have my health proposed by so eloquent and distinguished a gentleman as Mr. George Dawson. He has spoken of my going to hear him, and I may say that going to hear him is one of my great delights in coming to Birmingham. I enjoy nothing more than hearing Mr. Dawson in his own church. (Hear, hear.) I find him a gentleman able to vastly and powerfully impress me. We meet him as a natural gentleman, and we have a natural discourse which does us good. I confess I do not like to be very much frightened at church, neither do I think that sort of thing does much good—(hear, hear, and laughter)—but when we learn to love and honour the preacher, a discourse such as Mr. Dawson's is of eminent service to us. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Dawson has given me a promise to dine with me in New York.⁴ Well, I shall arrive there a fortnight

⁴ There are several notes in these volumes which Mr. Toole will probably not see until they are in the hands of the public, and this is one of them. It refers to the many special acts of charity and benevolence which have been mentioned to the chronicler by various correspondents. Some of the letters are from children, others are from secretaries of public institutions, and one or two are from men of an entirely private station. They are all full of gratitude for the help Mr. Toole has given to "those who are in necessity and tribulation." One correspondent draws special attention to the liberal and broad spirit in which Mr. Toole helps deserving charities either with his purse or his time. Mr. Toole is a member of the Church of England, but his sympathies are with the charities of every denomination of religionists, and he is tolerant of every creed. From a heap of correspondence of this class the chronicler selects for publication a note from Mr. Ralph Harrison, formerly manager of the *Birmingham Daily Gazette*. "Shortly before J. L. Toole's departure for America," writes Mr. Harrison, "he was fulfilling an engagement at Birmingham. At the time there was a bazaar for the benefit of Roman

before him, and I shall be able to crow over him like a native—(laughter)—and I'll show him round. (Renewed laughter.) Possibly he may meet with some odd things in the course of his rambles, and if he becomes President, which I think very likely—(laughter)—I shall knock at the door and say, 'I want to see the President,' and I will remind him of having been in the chair to-day. (Laughter.) And if, when we return 1000*l.* is wanted for any of the Birmingham hospitals—I have an ambition to play Shakspeare—I will play the principal gravedigger, but only to Mr. Dawson's 'Hamlet'—(laughter)—for I am sure he could act. (Renewed laughter.) I should

Catholic Schools being held in the Town Hall. There were few visitors at the hall, and the whole affair was likely to be a miserable failure, when a gentleman suggested to the manager of the bazaar that if Toole could be got to sing a song or two, he might draw an audience. The manager rubbed his hands with delight at the idea, and the gentleman undertook to see Mr. Toole on the subject. 'Certainly,' said Toole, who added, 'I shall come with pleasure.' Toole's resolve was intimated to the bazaar manager, who immediately got large posters printed, announcing 'J. L. Toole at the Town Hall to-morrow at 12.' When to-morrow came there was quite a rush, and the large Town Hall was crammed by twelve o'clock. Toole came and brought John Maclean with him, and the two together amused and interested the immense audience for nearly an hour, Toole singing some of his favourite songs and John Maclean reciting 'The Bridge of Sighs,' and other popular pieces. Both actors were loudly cheered, and Toole, before leaving, invested something like 5*l.* on bazaar odds and ends. But this was not all; Toole told the manager to announce him again for the night, and between the pieces at the Prince of Wales's Theatre he took a cab and drove down to the Town Hall and gave another immense audience two songs, for which he was rapturously encored. Toole then made his way back to the theatre to play in *Ici on Parle Français*. And so what was like to be a complete failure of a bazaar was, by the kindness of the great comedian and his friend Maclean, turned into an enormous success, and the Roman Catholic Institute was greatly benefited by the proceeds."

like to retire on the proceeds. (Laughter.) And I would promise him the same thing should not be repeated which once occurred when I played the gravedigger to Mr. T. C. King. Unfortunately, the stage was rather small and the box was rather large, and I dropped the skull to the bottom. Of course the soliloquy could not go on; the gallery boys were rather indignant, and one shouted, 'Come out, Toole, and give us a song!' (Laughter.) I must again thank you very sincerely for the great compliment you have paid me. I have had the good fortune to spend very many happy days in Birmingham, but this will be remembered as one of the happiest. It is a great pleasure for me to see one of my oldest friends in Birmingham in the vice-chair, and to see present the two managers of the theatres, who have behaved so handsomely and courteously to me. I wish I could say a great deal more, but you must not measure the depth of my gratitude by the very imperfect words I have given utterance to. As Jim Brass says, 'He was not a good speaker, but he was a deep thinker,' and I shall think deeply of this very happy gathering all through my tour. Permit me to wish you all good health, long life, and happiness." (Loud applause.)

Mr. Alderman Cornforth proposed "The Drama," and Captain Bullock "Our Theatres," to which Mr. Mercer Simpson and Mr. Rogers replied, the latter gentleman, in conclusion, giving "The Health of the Chairman," a gentleman, he said, who threw off the narrow trammels of bigotry, and came amongst them, actors and managers, on all occasions in the belief that they were reasonable, rational, and intellectual beings, and that their mission and their pleasure was not to demoralize the public, but to elevate it by

healthy, wholesome, and instructive amusement. It was a matter of great congratulation to find a reverend gentleman of Mr. Dawson's high character and culture sitting at the head of that table.

The Chairman, in response, said he made no pretensions to the title "reverend." There were some things which he thought could be said to men and women useful to be said, and they thought he was able to say them, and that was all. He was no priest, no dignitary of the Church. He was not "reverend," but "reverent"—(hear, hear)—and one sign of his being so was his being there, for he revered the whole of man's nature, except when it strayed from righteousness and truth. He revered the actor who faithfully performed his duty, he revered all honest work, all honest men, whatever their calling, the little child, the little dog, all nature. He revered man, woman, and child, and he thought he revered God. Therefore, though not "reverend," he was "reverent," and he thought that the better word of the two. As to being a "divine"—(laughter)—he was afraid no College of Divines would admit him, but he was content to be thrown out if he were admitted to colleges of men like that. He sincerely thanked them for their heartiness. He was too old to be taken in by appearances. He knew that what Mr. Rogers said he meant, and he knew from their faces they meant it, for one of the chiefest blessings of his life had been that during the whole time he had been in Birmingham, though some had blamed him and differed from him, yet when they had spoken kindly to him, he had felt they meant it. Man, woman, or child, he believed, had never spoken to him kindly without meaning it, and if he achieved no greater honour, no greater blessing,

he was content. To have been kindly spoken to, and always from the heart, atoned for many mistakes, for many unpleasantnesses, for crookedness he might have made or run against. Nothing had given him more pleasure in Birmingham than that. (Hear, hear.) So he believed it had been that day, and so might it be until he retired into private life—or into that most private life, to which for a time they must all go—he hoped, to meet again. (Loud applause.)

The company then separated.

X.

IN AMERICA.

Wig and Gown on the stage and off—"Too English"—American independence—The press—Playing at a lunatic asylum—An emotional Scotchman—Fechter—Welcomed at the Lotos—A poem by William Winter—Toole interviewed on his American impressions—First appearance—The next day's criticism—Notes on the American tour—Canada—The story of an editor and his wife—The coming holiday.

I.

"My American tour, which lasted over a year, was in every way successful, and in many ways pleasant. The Americans, when I went over, were not quite 'so English,' as they are now. I opened in Albery's play of *Wig and Gown*, which they didn't understand at all. It was 'too utterly English, you know.' The barrister's wig and gown is not an American institution. Learned gentlemen plead there in ordinary attire, and in some courts with a cigar in their mouths. This seems a little out of keeping with our notions

of the dignity of the law ; but I once saw a priest smoking a cigarette in a Continental cathedral, and, after all, that is even still more opposed to our prejudices. There is no harm, of course, in either case. Nothing is wrong, I suppose, unless you mean it to be ; and justice, I daresay, can be



MR. TOOLE IN "OFF THE LINE."

obtained as well without a wig as with it. I had to withdraw *Wig and Gown* after trying it for a week, though some of the scenes which the audiences did understand went capitally.

"*Off the Line*, *Dearer than Life*, *Oliver Twist*, *Paul Pry*, *Dot*, were the pieties that pleased the Americans most ; and the leading New York

papers were unanimous in their complimentary notices.

"I received many kindly tributes from both actors and playgoers, was frequently interviewed, had pleasant dinners given me here and there, and a most kindly reception at the Lotos Club. I went to Long Branch, and sprained my ankle—an accident which a minor critic, who, I suppose, had been somewhat haughtily treated by George Loveday, declared was an advertisement. The doctors said it was a sprain, and I know it pained me a good deal, which would not have been the case if it had been an advertisement.

"I travelled right through the States with varying fortune, but nowhere without receiving much kindness, nowhere without enthusiastic audiences.

"Theatres have very much improved within the last dozen years, not only in America, but in England, though I do not remember any house more primitive in England than one at which I played out West. There was a balcony in front of the theatre, with a band of music which played outside, after the manner of Richardson's Show at Greenwich Fair when I was a boy.

"In some cities the critics—who, by the way, were invariably kindly—thought I was too English; and at Boston, in a little speech which I made at the close of my engagement there after several very cordial calls, I told them that I was English, that my plays were English, and that I acted in English, and felt sure they would have been surprised if I had played to them in Italian, in German, or in Dutch. When Mr. Jefferson came to England we knew that he was an American, and we expected him to be national; and he was, and very delighted we were with his art. I thanked the American people for their

welcome, and for their acknowledgment of the truth they found in my interpretations of Dickens."

"What about your audiences?" I suggested.

"As a rule," he replied, "sympathetic and enthusiastic. They varied. What pleased them especially in one city was the thing they cared less about in another. I sometimes think one city made a point, as a matter of independence, of not liking what another went mad about. At the same time there was not an audience anywhere that I didn't feel I touched deeply in 'Michael Garner' and 'Caleb Plummer.' And the longer I stayed in a town the larger my audiences grew, and the more the number of my friends increased."

"You enjoyed your trip?"

"Very much. So also did my wife. My daughter, Florence, remained for some time in New York, where she entered upon a course of study. My son, Frank, travelled with me: the extremes of temperature were rather trying to him, as indeed they were to several members of my company. I felt the over-heating of the railway cars and the hot dressing-rooms now and then as an inconvenience; and I must confess that outside the great cities the food seemed to me to be very inferior and badly cooked. The country impressed me immensely; the splendid ranges of mountains, the great rivers, and the busy, excited, energetic crowds of people in the cities.

"My experiences of the newspapers, on the whole, were very pleasant. My manager, George Loveday, conducted our business on very independent and fearless lines. A few little waspish journals that you know exist here and there didn't relish this. They took it out of us now and then in what George called 'a scorcher;' but we were

English, you know, and kept to our English ways. I don't know whether that was altogether wise, in spite of the proverb, when at Rome, do as the Romans do ; but at least we held our own, made friends, I think, of the best people, and won our way to the respect and esteem of the highest critics.

"Some of our pieces on first representation were a little like olives to unaccustomed palates, and seemed to bother them. 'Spriggins' and the 'Dodger,' essentially London types, although of very opposite characters, puzzled them a good deal ; but on return visits they became immense favourites. The characters the Americans didn't quite understand in my *répertoire*, however, went straight home to the Canadians. I felt perfectly at my ease in the Dominion ; it was, in fact, England ; the theatres English, the audiences English ; and there was nothing we played that was not accepted with the same applause and laughter which belonged to my experiences of the United Kingdom.

"I always find it difficult to talk about myself and my acting. I hate to be egotistical, and believe I am naturally modest ; but when one has worked very hard and studied all one knows to realize an author's conception of character and to give life to it, of course nothing is more gratifying than the approving voices of big audiences. I had very earnest and complimentary invitations from managers right through the United States and Canada to remain another year, and not a season passes that invitations do not come asking me to name terms for another American tour.

"I gave several entertainments at public institutions in America ; two at the famous Pittsburg Lunatic Asylum at Dick's Pound. Dr. Reid was

the master of the institution, a singularly accomplished and earnest man. After a miscellaneous programme, concluding with *Off the Line*, he addressed myself and company in one of the most eloquent speeches I ever listened to, referring to the condition of the patients, some of whom were sufficiently capable to have enjoyed intensely the evening's amusement, others who would have vague and curious impressions of it, but for all of whom it represented a certain amount of such intellectual light and mirthfulness as they had the capacity to enjoy. It would always remain with them; if somewhat vague, a pleasant impression. A few might take it out into the world in after life; but with many it would remain with them under that roof until they passed away, for the majority were destined never to go beyond those walls.

"I afterwards received in England an account of the last occasion of my visit to the Asylum, and a very complimentary letter in the Report, which they publish annually as to the work and progress of the institution."

II.

"At Buffalo, where I played two nights, having hired the theatre from Meach Brothers, I played *Off the Line*, *Ici*, *Paul Pry*, and the Dodger scene from *Oliver Twist*. There is a pathetic scene in *Off the Line*. A man during the performance stood at the wings, and was deeply affected. I couldn't help noticing his emotion, so evidently genuine, and, of course, so very complimentary. It would not have escaped the sympathetic eye of Charles Kean, had he been the actor who had inspired it; and I confess this little tribute behind the scenes did not annoy me. But what *did* upset and astonish me very considerably was the fact that

of them was saying 'Good-bye.' The second was Creswick. Creswick remained in the room. The window was opposite Widdicombe's bed, and Creswick was in a strong light. The man who left was Fechter: he shook hands with me. I asked Creswick who the stranger was. "Some sporting friend," he replied.

"How are you, Widdicombe?" I asked.

"I am better to-day, dear fellow; but a little dull, just a trifle below par; I have been looking at Crezzy's wig—so long known to us—I have seen it so many years—feel a little tired—I think it's the wig."

"Creswick, as you know, wore the most palpable and aggressive wig; his head was bald all over. Poor Byron used to call him Creswig."

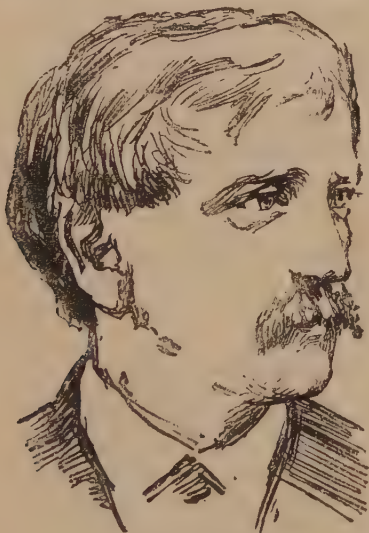
"Fechter had a farm in Pennsylvania, and lived there in the intervals of his professional tours. He had fifty-seven acres. I understood that he lived a curious kind of life. He married, as a second wife, Miss Lizzie Price, who had supported him in his leading engagements."

"His house was quite a pretty place, I was told, set back from the highway, covered with creepers; had handsome plate-glass windows, a grass plot, an old-fashioned pump and well, a nice garden, and in his study there were no end of firearms. He was fond of sport, both shooting and fishing, kept quite a collection of dogs; but all the exercise that this suggests did not overcome his tendency to obesity."

"When I saw him he was an entirely different man from the elegant actor who had drawn the town to the Adelphi. He died at the comparatively early age of fifty-six, having held a prominent position on the stage, not only in England and America, but in France and Germany."

IV.

THE modesty of my friend in regard to his American tour is remarkably illustrated by a collection of Press notices which I have received from Mr. Lowne, who not only delights in amassing all kinds of newspaper records relating to Mr. Toole and Mr. Irving, but who posts up in his scrap-books from day to day something like a history of the world. I am indebted to Mr. Lowne for the loan of several of these volumes, which have



MR. WILLIAM WINTER.

enabled me now and then to assist my host's memory, and from which I venture to make a few extracts relating to Mr. Toole's American tour, and his impressions of the United States.

His reception at the Lotos Club was of a very flattering character. Some seventy-five guests attended, among whom were Mr. Floyd, of Wallack's Theatre, the representative of Mr. John Lester Wallack, who was detained by

illness ; Mr. Augustin Daly, of the Fifth Avenue Theatre ; Mr. John T. Ford, manager of Baltimore and Washington Theatres ; Mr. William Stuart, Joseph Jefferson, Charles Gayler, John T. Raymond, John McCulloch, Charles Brookes, W. S. Andrews, and a large number of actors and lovers of the drama. Brief speeches of welcome were made by the President and by Mr. John Brougham, the First Vice-President of the Club. Mr. Toole responded in a witty and graceful address, after which there were speeches by Joseph Jefferson, William Stuart, A. Oakey Hall, John T. Ford, Isaac H. Bromley, and others.

In the course of the entertainment, a humorous and brilliant speech was made by Mr. William Winter, which he concluded by reading the following poem :—

JOHN LAURENCE TOOLE—A WELCOME.
(LOTOS CLUB, AUGUST 6TH, 1874.)

I.

THE odour that all sense delights
Enchants us most on summer nights ;
And music, Nature's kindest boon,
Breathes gentlest underneath the moon :
For summer night and moonlight give
Quiet and grace in which we *live* ;
In which alone the inner soul
Finds, if not words, at least control,
And, for a moment, lifts us far
Towards realms where saints and angels are.
So Friendship's soft and tender voice
Sounds clearest when our hearts rejoice ;
For, when true gladness thrills the heart,
Selfish and sordid cares depart,
Dulness retires—and in their place
Comes the rich glow of peace and grace.
And then we see each other clear ;
The voice within the voice we hear ;
And deep thoughts surge to eye and cheek,
Nor words, nor smiles, nor tears can speak !

The old love-ditties that were sung,
 The whispered vows, when we were young,
 The silken touch of fragrant tress,
 The maiden's awful loveliness,
 Starlight and sea-breeze, beach and spray,
 The sunshine of some sacred day,
 A mother's kiss on lip and brow,
 The tones of loved ones, silent now,
 The light that never more will gleam,
 The broken hope—the vanished dream—
 All these come thronging through the brain,
 Till, half with joy and half with pain,
 Our souls break loose from common things
 And soar aloft on angel wings,
 Out of the tumult and the glare,
 The fretful strife, the feverish care,—
 To that great life of peace and grace
 Which waits this suffering human race ;
 That larger life than sight or sound,
 Wherewith God's goodness folds us round.
 This is the magic, this the power
 That thrills, and crowns the festal hour.

II.

The summer, and the moon is bright,
 And perfect gladness rules this night ;
 And through our rapture, gracious, free,
 A silver voice across the sea
 In tender accents whispers sweet :
 " Be kind to him whom now you greet !
 By England's fireside altar-stone
 His name is prized, his virtue known :
 To England's heart his fame is dear ;
 To him she gives her smile, her tear ;
 She loves him for his rosy mirth ;
 She loves him for his manly worth :
 She knows him bright as morning dew ;
 She knows him faithful, tender, true ;
 Her hope comes with him o'er the deep,—
 With him to smile, with him to weep ;
 Ah, give him friendship that endures,
 And take him from her heart to yours !"—
 That voice is heard ! By deed and cheer
 We give him loyal welcome here !
 In art's fair garden, where we stand,
 We take him by the strong right hand ;

In friendship's cup the pledge we drain,
 And bind him fast with friendship's chain !
 Honour the man, whate'er his stage,
 Who wields the arts to cheer the age !

III.

And oh, my friends, if I might say
 (To point and close this humble lay)
 What other voices float to me,
 Across another, darker sea,
 What words of cheer are wafted through
 My fancy's realm, to him and you ;
 Some music, then, indeed, might flow
 Should make your hearts and pulses glow !
 For then would ring out, rich and deep,
 The royal tones of some who sleep—
 The brilliant and the wise, too soon
 Snatched from our side in manhood's noon :
 Ere genius half her vigil kept ;
 For whom our hearts and Morning wept ;
 And these a welcome without stint—
 My feeble words can only hint—
 Would give this friend and comrade, come
 So far from kindred and from home.
 But, this denied, I prattle on—
 The echo, when the music's gone—
 With yet the hope that words well-meant
 May find a grace, for good intent,
 With you, companions tried and dear ;
 With him the guest that's honoured here.
 Nor will I think he views with scorn
 These rhymes of welcome, lowly born ;
 These wild-wood roses, faint but sweet,—
 By kindness scattered at his feet.

V.

THE welcome accorded to the English comedian at Wallack's Theatre was of the most enthusiastic character. "His first words," says one of the leading critics, "'There's always somebody on this stairway,' betrayed his identity before he appeared behind the footlights ; and when, as 'Hammond Coote,' he tripped briskly upon the stage, with his genial face scarcely disguised by

his make-up as a middle-aged barrister of a good-natured, half-helpless, and wholly-lovable disposition, the thronged house rose at him, and for the space of two minutes the clapping of hands, the rapping of canes, and the shouts of 'Toole ! Welcome !' and 'Toole again !' completely drowned the words which were uttered but not expressed. . . . When the curtain fell upon the first act of *Wig and Gown*, there was not a doubtful mind in the audience, and the drop-curtain had hardly separated Mr. Toole from his critics before a storm of cheers summoned him to the front to receive as cordial a greeting as was ever vouchsafed to an actor in his trying but enviable situation."

Many floral tributes were handed over the footlights at the close of *The Spitalfields Weaver*, which finished the programme, and amongst them was a floral ship, presented by the passengers on the *Republic* who accompanied Mr. Toole across the Atlantic. It was quite a remarkable work of art, and was afterwards exhibited in the lobby of the theatre.

A week later Mr. Toole paid a visit to Long Branch, where a representative of the *New York Evening Mail* interviewed him, the writer stating in his introduction, that "few are gifted with so felicitous a manner as that possessed by Mr. Toole. Cordial, but acute, he receives visitors as friends, and makes them at home ; and, although speaking and acting with many English mannerisms, he is singularly free from those prejudices which have made some of his countrymen so unpopular in this country." Referring to his acting, the writer says : "His power of exciting to tears or laughter is unequalled ; but, admirable and amusing as are his broad comedy parts, I coincide with the opinion of many competent authorities in preferring his

rendering of serio-comic characters in which our nobler passions are interested."

The interview, question and answer, is worth repeating.

Q. What are your general impressions as to America?

A. I have been greatly surprised and delighted, and shall be more so in a month's time if America likes me as well as I like it.

Q. On your arrival at New York what astonished you most?

A. Blocks of buildings and blocks of ice.

Q. Which do you prefer?

A. I have tasted a good deal of the latter, and approve of it greatly when taken with straws and sugar.

Q. Talking of drinks, how do you find the feeding?

A. First-rate. Some of the hotels give you enough at one meal to last you for a week, and the variety of vegetables particularly astonished me. Who christened some of the dishes? I thought that clam chowder, gumbo and squash, were relations of my attendant darkey, and that he was imposing on my innocence, but now I have made their acquaintance I find them much better than "Le Roi Carotte" and all that sort of thing, you know.

Q. Was your reception satisfactory?

A. More than I could possibly have expected. I have received the greatest kindness from all sorts of people. Through the kindness of friends, I have received the freedom of the Manhattan, Union, and Lotos Clubs, and the banquet given to me by the members of the last was intensely gratifying. Old friends and new faces welcomed me, and I rejoiced that I had left Old England to visit Greater Britain. Among those who have

pecially extended courtesies to me are Joe Jefferson, John Owens, Sothern, John Brougham, Mark Twain, Dan Bixby, Lawrence Barrett, Manager Stuart, Oakey Hall, Mr. H. Marston, Messrs. Jarrett and Palmer, J. Ratty, W. Floyd, J. L. Wallack, Theodore Moss, and the members of the Lotos Club.

Q. Have you seen much of the country?

A. I have visited Niagara and Saratoga.

Q. What do you think of Niagara?

A. The greatest sight I ever saw. I saw it the evening I arrived, and got up before daylight to see it again in case none of the water should be left. It can't last long anyhow, and I wrote to several of my London friends to come over soon, as I didn't believe it could go on at the same rate. I told the hotel proprietor that I never knew any performance had such a "long run," but he assured me that he had made special arrangements that the fall season would continue till further notice. When we were under the falls I had to pay for my costume. This was the first time I had ever paid for "dressing up," as I generally receive pretty large sums for putting on eccentric costumes.

Q. What do you think of Saratoga?

A. The vastness of the hotels surprised me. Also I felt a kindred feeling for the darkey hall-men. They sat along in a row like negro minstrels, and I was much astonished at the absence of bones and tambourine; wondered whether the conundrums would be good, and finally asked the clerk which was Dan Briant, and when the show would commence.

Q. Did you taste the waters?

A. I went through a course conscientiously, and they did not make me quite so unwell as our English mineral waters. Something out of a

black bottle taken afterwards improves the taste, you know.

Q. What do you think of Long Branch?

A. I think it is a very jolly place. Hotels remarkably good and bathing admirable, you know.

Q. What specially attracted your attention?

A. My own portraits, which are spread all over the place, and I think make me look very serious. You will please inform the public that I do not intend to play *Richard III.* or *Othello*; my agent, Mr. Loveday, must slyly have told the photographer to give me a romantic appearance. I have heard a good many unconscious inquiries as to "that fellow Toole"—of course, I have my own opinion as to that, but modesty prevents my divulging it, you know.

Q. What do you think of the New York theatres?

A. I have not seen Wallack's lighted yet, but consider it one of the best comedy theatres I ever entered. All the arrangements seem very perfect. Very few of the rest are open, but I have visited Niblo's and Booth's, and was greatly impressed by their suitableness for spectacle and the splendour of decoration.

Q. What do you think of the ladies?

A. Very charming. The more I see of them the more I shall like them—particularly in the auditorium at Wallack's.

Q. What do you think of the Third Term?

A. It is not fair to puzzle an unoffending stranger with conundrums. I give it up.

Q. How do you like being interviewed?

A. The process of extracting ideas is preferable to that of extracting teeth, particularly when the operator is so—you know what I mean, you know, and if you know—

Here Mr. Toole extracted a specimen of our fractional currency and began folding it up with great care. I pointed sternly to the final paragraph of the editorial advice to persons about to be interviewed and asked,—

Q. Can I oblige you with change on a 'bus ticket?

A. Well, no, you know, not at present, very much obliged, you know. Let's go to lunch.

The interview then closed.

HESPERUS.

P.S.—And very important.

CERTIFICATE OF VERACITY.

The above interview is real. None others are genuine unless signed,

J. L. TOOLE.

VI.

THE *Tribune*, in its notice of 'Uncle Dick,' said :—
 "The test that Mr. Toole meets is this, that in conditions of circumstance which arouse the best emotions of average humanity his art makes him the perfect reflection of the nature of mankind. The colour is English, but the fact is universal. . . . Mr. Toole makes no points, but conducts himself, whether in joy or in affliction, precisely as a humble, simple-minded, tender-hearted man might do in the circumstances suggested. There is a Peggotty-like scene for 'Uncle Dick' towards the close of the play, and in this Mr. Toole was surpassingly powerful—by dint of absolutely quiet intensity of suffering, threaded by jets of that humour which might flow out of the effort of a sweet nature to be kind and jolly under painful circumstances. To see this is to think in what a grand and splendid way affliction elevates even the commonest human being. Not moonlight on the ocean, nor sunset in the forest, can be more weirdly

melancholy, more awful, or more sublime than the lofty state of anguish, striving to be cheerful, of a good man broken-hearted through his self-devoting affection."

The *Times* said, "Mr. Toole personates the noble, well-meaning hero of *Uncle Dick's Darling* with such fidelity to nature that we are puzzled how to criticize his acting."

The result of the Philadelphian criticisms may be summed up in the expressed hope that he would come back again. "He is an actor for whom one's liking increases with each time that he is seen."

Baltimore congratulated Mr. Ford, the manager of the Grand Opera House, on his engagement of an actor worthy of the brilliant audiences that assembled to greet him, the *Press* declaring that "his 'Artful Dodger' is the drollest and most enjoyable piece of acting we have seen for a long time. All other attempts at its presentation are complete failures compared with Mr. Toole's great success."

Cincinnati found in his 'Harry Coke,' in *Off the Line*, "unsurpassable tenderness and pathetic force."

Syracuse and Pittsburg were equally delighted with all his performances; and at critical Chicago we find one of the leading papers in the West, the *Inter-Ocean*, referring to *Dearer than Life* as "one of the best works of modern drama," and the representation of "Michael Garner" as "one of the most finished pieces of modern acting." "In view of the discussion now going on among the clergy and extremists of all denominations regarding the theatre," says the *Inter-Ocean*, "it is a question whether a better sermon has ever been preached, or a truer method inculcated, than that contained in the sterling honour, characteristic

humour, delicate tenderness, and heroic self-sacrifice displayed by the plain but honest 'Michael Garner.' We can readily understand why Mr. Toole has gained so high a reputation among his countrymen; and, while a certain familiarity with London life is indispensable to a full appreciation of his inimitable truth to life, there is the broad element of human nature, and the deep sympathy with human feeling, which appeal to all alike wherever found. The character of 'Michael Garner' is one peculiar to London. It is the type of the sterling, honest shopkeeper—the man whose pride is his unblemished name and upright character. He may be vulgar, and, to the fastidious eyes of his would-be-genteel neighbours, he is vulgar, and yet in his heart of hearts he carries the delicacy and honour of a gentleman, and in his dealings with his fellows he never forgets his old friends, his early life, his parents, and his God. Such a man is 'Michael Garner,' and there is no actor now living who could more faithfully and more truly have stood in that Briton's shoes than Mr. Toole. His every action, his every attitude are perfect. The very manner in which he lifts his coat-tails, the way in which he expresses his joy, his welcome to his guests, his dress, his joviality, his anger, his pathos, all are true to life—truer than anything the stage has given us for many years. In this character Mr. Toole is more than a comedian; he is great. We question whether Garrick himself ever exhibited a more finished piece of pantomime than where the old man trifles with his bread and thinks of those he loves."

St. Louis, Louisville, and in fact all the other cities that Mr. Toole visited, appear through their press to have been as thoroughly entertained and delighted as was the critic of the *Chicago Inter-*

Ocean, and *Wig and Gown* being out of the bill, the whole of Mr. Toole's *répertoire* is cordially endorsed, and his company, more particularly Mr. Herbert, Miss Johnstone, and Mr. Westland, receive special marks of favour at the hands of the critics. The *Louisville Courier* regarded the "Dodger" as "a bit of character-sketching which, for artistic make-up and rendering is not surpassed upon the stage the world over. We know of no actor who is more painstaking : he overlooks no detail, and there is originality in whatever he presents."

The *Cincinnati Gazette* was impressed with the remarkable individuality of each of Mr. Toole's characters, coupled with which "thoroughness in art" the writer found "a remarkable fidelity to nature, a fine sense of humour, and an artistic propriety which never steps outside the business of the play."

The Canadian papers were entirely unanimous in their praise of Mr. Toole's work, regarding him as "a genial and masterly exponent of the richest humour, and having an equal command of tender pathos." The *Toronto Mail* and *Leader* vied with each other in saying the pleasantest and most complimentary things, as indeed did the leading journals of the other cities. At Ottawa the first night was spoken of in the journals as "a gala night," and the last night was equally crowded and festive. At Montreal the same; and the Dominion parted with him with cordial expressions of regard.

VII.

"You had a curious experience at a certain American city which was to be nameless," I said, "the genial citizen who *would* take you home, and when he got there was another man; do you remember it? You told me the story years ago."

My host looks up at me for a moment with a puzzled face, which presently beams with a genial laugh.

"Oh! yes, I remember," he says; "it was at ——. Don't mention the place; he might not like it, and I should be sorry to hurt his feelings. Besides, he was the editor of the leading newspaper in the district, and had a rival journalist, of course, and if that rival journalist got hold of the story wouldn't his rival worry him! But you know best about that. I am not a journalist. Actors have no rivalries, of course. I remember that American editor. 'You must stay with me, my dear Mr. Toole; you *must*; we will take no denial,' he said. He seemed a jolly, nice sort of fellow, and was so tremendously pressing that I gave way and went home with him; it was some distance, in the suburbs.

"At home he was a different man entirely. The wife was 'the boss.' She was a learned woman also: had quite a knowledge of literature and poetry. She fired off questions at me with regard to Thackeray and Dickens, and other celebrities. There were several children, they all stood round me and questioned me, cross-examined me.

"After a time they gave me a cup of tea. This was in the afternoon, instead of lunch or dinner.

"I went to the theatre, acted, and went home with him at night.

"After a little more questioning from his wife without any signs of refreshment, she asked me if, before I went to bed, I would have a cup of tea or a glass of water. Whereupon he, in a very humble way, said, 'We never take alcohol in this house.'

"I was so depressed and overweighted with the whole thing that I hadn't the courage to say I

should like something to eat. I had a glass of water and went to bed.

"I couldn't sleep, however. I was frightfully hungry and tired; really thought of getting out of the window and running away, and should have done so if it had not been too high, although the city was at some distance. We had to drive to the house, which was in the suburbs.

"On saying 'good-night,' the wife informed me that they breakfasted at half-past seven, at which time it was clear I was expected to be up. So just as I was thoroughly exhausted, and could have slept a little, I was aroused, and had to turn out.

"I had breakfast, and then hoped to join Love-day at his hotel and get a little rest. But the wife said, 'Now, So-and-so, take Mr. Toole out and show him all the public buildings of ——.'

"And he did take me out, and began to show me all the public buildings. And once or twice I tried to slip away from him, in private rooms and corners, and get a wink of sleep. But he was the most persistent host I ever had.

"At last, in the midst of our tour of the public buildings, I gave him the slip, and fairly ran away; went to the hotel without my luggage, and nothing would induce me to leave it. I apologized to my host, I hope in as friendly a way as possible; but the very thought of the adventure even at this distance of time makes me shudder."

VIII.

"AND now," said my genial host, "we are entitled to our holiday."

"A holiday for me, but work for you," I said.

"I long to get to work again," he replied; "it seems years since I left off. I felt as if I had been to Aix half my life until we began the other day to

put the incidents of the time into your note-book. To-day is Wednesday. I open at Whitby on Monday. From there I go to Harrogate, beginning my tour quietly and in very pleasant places. Suppose we start for York on Friday, spend Saturday or Sunday there, go to the Cathedral, moon about, have a chat after dinner, and leave for Whitby Monday morning?"

"Agreed," I said; "and *au revoir*."

XI.

OUR TRIP TO THE NORTH.

At York—Buying up the Press—A lesson in moral ethics—The Cathedral and the Theatre—At the Yorkshire Blind Asylum—Queer characters—A reminiscence of Downing Street—Toole and Rabelais—Troublesome callers and correspondents—The outside world and actors—"Orders"—"Who's to pay me for my time?"—John Ryder and his mysterious patron—Was he a bishop out of work?—A visit to St. Mary's—Toole's pleasant fooling—The story of "A Wonderful Old Dame at York."

I.

It was on a Friday in September, 1886, that we stepped into the Great Northern express at King's Cross, and arrived at York in time for dinner. In the evening we took a walk in the direction of the theatre. We found several of the newsboys of the city congregated in the locality of the playhouse, which was redeemed from the term "profane" by the fact that it was within the shadow of the Cathedral. Toole, finding the boys had had a poor sale for their papers (at least they so informed him) bought up their remaining stock, and then commenced to question them concerning

the theatre. The scene of the interview was the pit and gallery entrance, and the boys numbered four, the eldest a lad of about fifteen, a knowing-looking fellow, who had the instinct of a diplomatist, but did not meet with the success that is usually supposed to accompany judicious lying.

"You never go into such a wicked place as that?" said Toole, pointing a warning finger at the theatre.

"No, sir," said the diplomatist, who took upon himself to be spokesman for the rest.



MR. TOOLE AND THE YORK NEWSBOYS.

"You know better?"

"Yes, sir, I do," replied the diplomatist with a long, serious face.

"Go to Sunday school?"

"Oh, yes, sir," replied the diplomatist, counting his pennies.

"That's right, it is a good thing to go to Sunday school; do you all go?"

"Not me," said the smallest of the four, a bright-eyed, merry-looking little fellow.

"Why not?"

"My clothes ain't good enough."

"But you have been to the theatre, I can see you have; now don't deny it if it is true."

"Yes, I have, sir," said Bright-eyes, whose clothes were not good enough for Sunday school.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" Toole exclaimed, turning his head away in evident pain, and then once more facing the diplomatist: "but *you* wouldn't go to the theatre, whether your clothes were good enough or not?"

"No, sir, I know how wicked it is."

"The devil's house, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said the diplomatist.

"Have *you* ever been inside the theatre?" Toole asked, addressing another of the four.

"Yes, sir, to pantomime."

"To pantomime!" Toole exclaimed, in a tone of encouragement.

"Yes, sir."

"Wasn't it fine?"

"It was, sir."

"Did you like the clown?"

"I did, sir!"

"So did I, when I was a boy! Would you like to go and see the play now?" the former severity of his manner having disappeared.

"I should, sir."

"And you?" asked Toole, addressing Bright-eyes.

"Yes, sir," was the prompt response.

"And *you*?" asked Toole, feeling in his pocket whence the coppers had come that had purchased the newspapers.

The face of the diplomatist was a study. His mouth twitched, his eyes wandered.

"You'll go home if your wicked companions go into the devil's house, eh?" said Toole.

"I don't know, sir," said the diplomatist, almost tearfully.

"Now you *have* been in there" (pointing to the gaily-lighted entrance to the pit, decorated with bills of the play depicting the fun of an American company), "that's why you are troubled?"

"Yes, sir, only to pantomime."

"There; don't tell any more stories about it," said Toole, "never tell stories, let this be a warning to you; it is not wicked to go and be amused at a theatre, if you are good boys, do your work, and are honest, and go to church or chapel. There, come along."

The four youngsters followed the comic teacher into the entrance-hall of the palace of delight, he paid for their admission, and we followed to get a peep at them from the pit. The house was not crowded; they found room in the front-row seats of the gallery. The diplomatist was the first to make his appearance and to take what he considered to be the best seat; presently they were all roaring with laughter at some of the practical American fun, Bright-eyes clapping his hands when the scene was over, with intense enjoyment. "They are happy," said Toole, as we left the pit, "we have bought up the Press and bribed the publishers; now let us go and see what is going on in front of the house."

II.

THE main entrance to the Theatre at York is quite a good example of ecclesiastical architecture, as if the Cathedral authorities had said to themselves, "We cannot avoid having this profane house here, but we will try and disguise it;" and

they have done so most effectually. If they made a persistent effort to see that the entertainments given within were in accordance with the high spirit they suggest in the portico, it would be better for art, and none the worse for the growing diplomatists and the children who cannot go to Sunday school because their clothes are not good enough. I don't know that the York ecclesiastics do not patronize the theatre, but I have had some experience of Cathedral cities, and I have not known one of them where the followers of the profession of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Garrick, Kean, Macready, and the rest were not as a rule regarded askance and left to perform if not to empty benches at least to a house free from the patronage of the Church. The religious people of provincial cities forget that the theatre must always degenerate where the light and leading of a district neglect it, and thus fail to secure, if not the highest and artistic performances, at least such as shall not pander to the brutalized passions of those whom education does not redeem from the worst vices.

The entertainment was more than half over. The front of the house was in semi-darkness. A solemn porter sat within the gloomy portals. We affected to regard the place as a church or meeting-house. He was a stolid Yorkshireman. He was not going to bother himself about a couple of fools who didn't know a theatre from a chapel. Presently Toole, addressing him in a serious voice, not above a whisper, asked if it would be possible to hire the place.

"Hoire it?" he replied. "I dussay."

"We might like to give a missionary service here," said Toole, with a touch of the Mawworm grimace.

"Indeed!" said the porter.

"In aid of the Chocktaw Indians," Toole went on, "a much neglected race."

"Aw' can give you no information, yo'll ev to see t' manager."

"Indeed," said Toole, "I suppose there is a service now going on."

"Aye," said the porter, as if it was not worth his while to call the play anything else.

"Might we look in?" said Toole.

"You mought," replied the porter.

Toole took off his hat and we entered, the porter watching us as we went up to the office and took our tickets in presence of two character portraits of Toole, one as the "Dodger," the other as "Paul Pry." Presently it was whispered all over the place that Toole was in the house; then there was a good deal of "How-do-you-do, Mr. Toole! Very good of you to come in and see us," and so on; and then we saw that the porter had joined the little complimentary crowd, and though he continually fell into silent fits of internal mirth, he made no noise, but doubled himself up and had private and noiseless struggles with himself against what is called bursting with laughter.

III.

THE next morning we strolled about York, "hung upon the bridge," and questioned the right of the toll-man to charge us for crossing; then tried to arrange with him a payment down to cover the time we should remain, as we might find it necessary to cross the bridge very often; finally offered to buy the bridge and release the citizens from the tax, and so on, all in a pleasantly serious way, and to the advantage of the toll-keepers in the end, whether they would or no; for Toole objects to study character, as he calls it, for his own amusement and instruction, without the offer of a

solatium for any trouble or chagrin on the part of the character studied.

Later in the day we called upon Mr. Buckle, the accomplished master of the Yorkshire School for the Blind. Two years previously Toole had given a performance to the children, boys and girls. When we entered the schools, after a stroll in the grounds, Mr. Buckle said, "Don't speak, I would like to see if they remember you."

We went into the girls' school first. The pupils all rose as we entered. Some of them were verging upon young-womanhood.

"I have brought a friend to see you," said the master.

They smiled, some of them turning their sightless eyes towards the master with an expression of inquiry upon their calm faces.

At a sign Toole spoke.

"Good morning, young ladies," he said.

"Who is it?" asked the master.

One of the girls, hesitating hardly a moment, and with a pleased and confident manner, exclaimed, "Mr. Toole!" which was followed by a general exclamation of "Mr. Toole!"

"I am very glad you remember me again," said Toole, "and I hope you are all well; you look well."

"Yes, thank you, Mr. Toole," said several voices.

In the boys' department the same test was applied. The boys did not respond, however, at once. They appeared more anxious than the girls.

"Don't you remember *Trying a Magistrate*?" asked Toole.

"Yes, yes," said two voices at once; it is Mr. Toole," and the whole school laughed spontaneously.

The comedian chatted with the boys for a little time, telling them he had heard they had given a public concert, and how pleased he was to learn that it had been a great success.

The Yorkshire School for the Blind has the reputation among experts of being the best and most practical of its kind in existence. It is less of a show school than some, but it is very thorough in its work, the headmaster possessing all the knowledge and patience necessary to make good teachers and happy pupils. Mr. Buckle is a University man, and is, among other accomplishments, an artist-etcher of considerable skill and taste. "The Historie of the King's Manor House" at York, by R. Davies, F.S.A., is exquisitely illustrated by Mr. Buckle, the work being not only a labour of love from an artist's point of view, but for the reason that the King's Manor House at York is the home of the Blind School, which shares the grand old place with the National School for Boys; and within the precincts of the beautiful remains of St. Mary's Abbey, which contains the King's Manor House, are the Museums of Natural History and Antiquities, belonging to the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. The ruins of St. Mary's Abbey are singularly picturesque, and Mr. Buckle's pupils seem to have full licence to ramble through the lovely turf-like grounds that surround them. We spent some time on Sunday with Mr. Buckle and his family. His pupils and their monitors seemed to be quite a part of his household. They all appeared to be very happy, both boys and girls, and had many sources of amusement. At the Cathedral, which we attended, they were earnestly devout, but took more interest in the singing than in any other part of the service. They remained to hear the voluntary, and enjoyed it immensely; one of the boys

is himself a fine organist, and several are excellent musicians. When they returned from the service to go home, the boys, in companies of six or eight, touched each other's shoulders with their hands and, keeping thus together, walked away without any difficulty, and as we strolled along among the good York folk who had been to church, Mr. Buckle told us many interesting stories of the wonderful things the blind can do both in the industrial and fine arts. All this entertained us immensely, and I felt a special interest in Mr. Buckle's revelations, having myself, in association with the Bishop of Worcester, the Rev. Mr. Blair, Dr. Williams, and a select committee, projected and assisted to found the Worcester School for the Blind, our chief object being the popularization of the Roman alphabet, the first embossed example of the local printing of which I executed upon my own press in the ancient city of "the crowning mercy." But enough of myself. The next morning a bulky package went to the schools; it contained many examples of chocolates, purchased that morning in York, and the authority of Mr. Buckle was besought for a distribution of the same "with Mr. Toole's love" on the earliest fitting occasion.

IV.

"AMONG the queer characters I have met, I recall," he said, "a very egotistical fellow who never talked about anybody but himself: not that he had anything interesting to say about himself, but he talked of nothing but how he lived; what time he got up, how he breakfasted, when he lunched, what he ate, when he went to bed, and how he was in a general way. I have often thought of him as a suggestion for character. A sort of man who when he gets

up in the morning says, 'How am I, to-day?' and who carries that spirit of selfishness, unconscious or otherwise, throughout his life. It is never with him, 'How are you, to-day?' but 'How am I? Let me look at my tongue. How is my pulse? *How am I?*'"



MR. TOOLE AS "CHAWLES."

The point of the following reminiscence is also one example of this genuine sense of humour, which it has just occurred to me to mention, though I hope these volumes teem with similar illustrations.

"I have several times had the pleasure of

breakfasting with Mr. Gladstone. He wrote a letter to me after he saw 'Chawles' and *Ici* at the Globe: wrote and asked if I would go and lunch or breakfast with him. I went, and he was very complimentary, expressed great pleasure at my performances. We talked about theatres. In regard to the influence of audiences upon actors, he related to me a story about Young in Edinburgh. Young was playing 'Iago.' In the first act he was not at all up to the mark. At the end of the second an intimate friend went round and said, 'Why, Young, you played this second act far better than the first—a different thing altogether!' 'Yes,' Young replied, 'Scott came into a box at the beginning of the second act.' 'Yes,' I said in reply, 'one does, as it were, get inspiration from a special audience sometimes, not that I would wish to disparage the general and regular audiences; but from the moment you came into the theatre, the night before last, to see *Ici on Parle Français*, I felt that I played 'Spriggins' with a new zest.

"On the second occasion when I breakfasted with Mr. Gladstone, Lord Tennyson was there, and two or three clergymen. I was deeply impressed both with the statesman and the poet; very much surprised at Mr. Gladstone's conversational powers. He talked to me about theatres and dramatic art; then to Tennyson about other things, and to the clergymen about Church affairs; then about science to a savant. He told me several theatrical anecdotes, and seemed to talk just as well on every subject. That was at Harley Street. I afterwards breakfasted with him in Downing Street; Professor Blackie was there. The conversation rose to such a high and elevated platform that, when I left and found myself in the street, I talked to a policeman to try

and bring myself down to the level of ordinary life."

V.

I HAVE said that Toole has a quaint sense of humour ; and over supper, at York, I had several striking illustrations of it. Humour is of no period nor nationality. We were talking of memory, and how it is cultivated to a marvellous power by actors.

"Has it ever struck you," he asked, "what possible quackery there is in this new business of memory teaching?" and he went on to answer his own question as clever story-tellers and modern ballad-makers do. "I often think of a capital illustration of the nonsense of these memory men when I see their advertisements. A man pays two guineas and takes lessons. At the end of his course he returns, rings the bell—'What is it?' they ask. 'I have forgotten my umbrella!'"

This is akin to Rabelais' satire of Panurge consulting Herr Trippa the astrologist, who could forecast and tell all things to come, and was intended to typify a famous German sage ; and who foretold Panurge how he should be deceived and disgraced by his wife when he married ; and who, knowing everything, did not know that while he was prating to the king or Panurge, the pages and lacqueys about the Court were making love successfully to his wife, who was passable fair and a pretty snug hussy ; that, indeed, what he was so solemnly predicting for another was happening to himself.

VI.

"I SOMETIMES think you might make a chapter out of the curious men I have met, and another about theatrical 'orders,'" said my friend and host.

"Don't you think we have already described a few of your discoveries in this direction?"

"Yes, of course. 'How am I?' is a good one; might be worked up, eh? Would make a capital character in a play. The loafers who call on one to beg and borrow are full of character; I don't allude to the genuine cases of distress, but to the men who make a business of it.

"I remember a fellow meeting me in Dublin some years ago, rushing up to me, with great volubility, 'Ah, my dear Toole, my dear John Toole, I am so glad to see ye looking so well,' taking my hand in both his and grasping it most cordially. 'Can I have ten minutes with ye—just ten minutes? I have a matter of importance to talk to ye about.'

"I saw at once that he was a borrower, and a flashy one; not a man you could put off with a sovereign. So I told him I was very busy just then, and was very much bothered, had been losing money lately, and should very much like to have ten minutes with him; and asked if he thought he could lend me 300/.

"'Good Lord, no! Me lend you 300/.'"

"Well, I said, perhaps some of his friends might. However, if he would come round to me that evening after the play, or meet me at the hotel, I would like to talk it over with him.

"Oh, very well, of course he would come. Of course I never saw him afterwards."

"And have you not met some odd and eccentric ladies, as well as odd and eccentric men in your time?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I have, and they are among the most troublesome of my correspondents; more troublesome than men because one can't be rude to them. For instance, the dear old ladies who never go to theatres, and yet beg one

to 'Try a Magistrate' at their bazaars, or sing 'The Speaker's Eye' at their tea-parties. Don't you think one has reason to be annoyed when Lady Fitzboodle, at one of these social functions, as it is the fashion to call tea-parties now-a-days, says, 'Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Toole, it is



MR. TOOLE IN "THE STEEPLECHASE."

so kind of you ; I never go to a theatre, therefore it is doubly kind of you to favour us in this way ;' I need not say I have declined to favour that identical ladyship again ; I suppose it is thoughtlessness this kind of thing."

"Call it eccentricity," I said.

"Well, I don't mind ; there must be all kinds

of people to make up the great world, but there are some kinds one could do without.

“ There is a dear old lady in Glasgow who only reads two books, Shakspeare and the Bible ; and has never read, she tells me, any other. I always call and talk to her. She has seen Edmund Kean and Liston, and all the great actors, and is still as fond of the play as ever ; fresh, bright, and interesting ; quotes frequently from her two books, the Bible and Shakspeare. A very cheerful, bright playgoer, very different from the lady whom I mentioned in my speech at the Rosebery banquet, who thought I must be a gay man because I went to the theatre every evening.

“ How strangely little the outside world knows of actors and acting after all ; and how firmly rooted is the prejudice against both ! There is another old lady, who is, in fact, a relative of mine, who had been brought up not to go to theatres ; but after many years she made up her mind to see me act. But in order to see me under what she considered far more proper conditions than those which applied to a theatre, she went to see me at the Crystal Palace. She was very much entertained, and wanted to see me in another piece, and she then came a step nearer to the region of impropriety ; she came to the theatre at a morning performance, thinking that that was less wicked than going in the evening.

“ And mind you, there is a lot of this nonsense going on, this compounding with sin, as it were, this bargaining with conscience ; there are many worthy people who try and persuade themselves that it is not in the least wrong to see *The Steeplechase* at the Crystal Palace, but who would feel quite wicked if they came to see the same play at a London theatre. In the same way thousands

go to German Reed's and see every kind of dramatic entertainments, comedies, operas, farces, who would never dream of going to a theatre. I am not blaming them ; it is their affair, not mine, and they get their money's worth at German Reed's, but it is very funny how people can be so illogical ; and, after all, the theatre began in the Church ; the clergymen were among the first actors, and some of their religious plays, I believe, were of a very remarkable and sensational character.

“ But we were talking of ‘orders’ ; that is another curious subject. Some people who can well afford to pay will do any mean kind of thing to get an order for the theatre. I have known ladies and gentlemen drive gaily up to King William Street in their carriages and pair, attended by powdered footmen, and present with pride an order for a box, or a couple of unnumbered tickets for the stalls. There are men who seem to think it is a kind of endorsement of position to be able to get an order to go into a theatre. I remember, when I was a very young actor, a friend saying he hoped I should take a theatre because it would be so jolly to know where he could always get orders. I receive curious letters for orders, with curious reasons why I should send them. A chemist's assistant wrote for an order, his claim being that he had once prepared a prescription for me, and had made up the wrong medicine, fortunately without injury ; and this had always made him follow my career with the greatest interest. Another applicant for dress-circles said he was emboldened to ask the favour because he had once met my uncle on board a steamer. Buckstone said when he became a manager he had to give up writing pieces, his time was so much occupied in writing orders. And yet Charles Mathews once told me

of 'the boots' at a country hotel where he was staying asking to be paid for going to the theatre. Mathews, struck with the fellow's civility, gave him an order for the play.

" 'Come and see the piece, Tom,' said Mathews.

" 'At the theatre?'

" 'Yes,' said Mathews. 'Here is an order for you.'

" The next day Mathews said, 'Well, Tom, did you like the play?'

" 'Oh, yes,' said the boots, in a dubious kind of way; 'but who's to pay me for my time?'

" There are extremes, you see, in all things; the people who will carry on a perfect intrigue to get an order, and 'the boots' who wants to be paid for his time.

" Billington tells a good story, which I commend to the consideration of the order-fiend. A Yorkshire friend of Billington's came to London. Billington asked him if he was coming to the theatre.

" 'Of course,' he said; 'I'm coming to see thee act.'

" 'When?'

" 'To-morrow night.'

" 'Very well,' said Billington, 'I'll send you an order; how many for—yourself and wife?'

" 'I shall bring the missus,' said the Yorkshireman, 'but I want no orders, lad; how's thy mester to pay thee thy salary if thou lets folk in for nowt?'

" That is a point the order-monger never seems to think of. A theatrical manager does not ask his butcher to give him an order for a sirloin, and he expects to pay his tailor and his grocer. When I was a lad in a wine-merchant's office, as I have before mentioned, I used, certainly, to get and to

give wine-tasting orders for the docks—that was an old custom, you know, and may obtain to some extent now, but it pretty well ruined more than one firm. A bad thing, orders, bad for everybody—‘for him that gives and him that receives,’ as Shakspeare says!

“There are certain persons whom one considers to be entitled to the privileges of the house; but, as a rule, these persons are most considerate, and when business is exceptionally good they are quite sensitive about asking for seats: they understand, of course, what an expensive thing the management of a theatre is, while many irresponsible and thoughtless order-hunters, if ever they do think about it, seem to imagine that the lessee of a theatre is only in fun, and that he opens his house simply for the pleasure of writing orders for all who have the audacity or the assumed friendliness to apply for them.”

VII.

PRESENTLY our conversation turned upon travel and international affairs, notably in regard to French and English art.

“There have been several efforts on the part of English theatrical companies to capture Paris,” said Toole. “I don’t think any of them can be said to have succeeded. The only one of which I have any knowledge was what the Americans would call the Ryder and Swinburne combination. It was an excellent company, including Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mrs. Arthur Sterling, and others; but is said not to have been brilliant in the way of management. How I came to know anything about it was in this way.

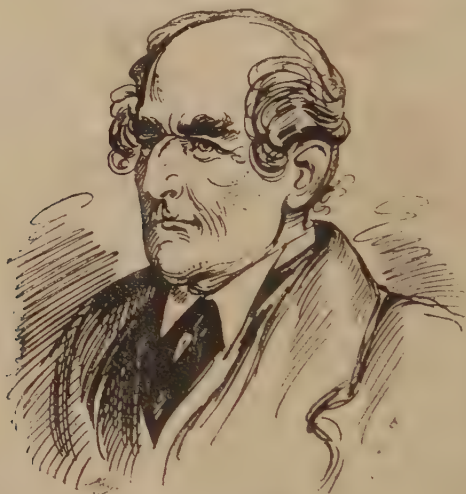
“It was during my engagement at the Gaiety. I had taken a holiday with my family and was returning home from Switzerland with George

Loveday and my son Frank. I saw an announcement of *Hamlet* at the Athénée,¹ a theatre which, by the way, was underground. On inquiry I heard that affairs were rather sixes and sevens, that there was no prospect of any great success; not, as I have said before, on account of the artists,

¹ The Paris correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* says:—"The English troupe which has come over here to perform Shakspeare has chosen a very unpropitious moment. There is hardly any one in town, and the remaining inhabitants prefer the shores of the lakes of the Bois de Boulogne and Vincennes during this torrid weather to the theatre. It is true that *Hamlet* is being performed in a kind of cellar, where the *paradis* is below the level of the Seine, where one has to descend to the upper boxes, and that the Athénée is the coolest of playhouses. Still the weather is too hot. In addition to this, it is reckoned that only 20,000 Frenchmen in Paris understand English, and that 15,000 of these are engaged in commercial pursuits. It is remembered with shame how Macready could not draw an audience, and how, with tears in his eyes, he rushed from the stage, exclaiming that Paris would always be the capital of Boeotia. However, modern languages are now to be seriously studied, and we may live to see Shakspeare appreciated in the original. The few critics who have ventured to the Athénée speak well of the performance, in spite of the difficulties surrounding it. A portion of the scenery belongs to *Une Folie à Rome*, and an Italian terrace serves for that at Elsinore. M. Auguste Vitu says that the actors, all Horse Guards, are much too large for the stage, and resemble a troupe of whales disporting themselves in an aquarium. He and Theodore Banville were the only two critics who were able to sit out the performance. He found Mr. Ryder, whom he terms '*un grand diable* of an Englishman,' more like Don Quixote than the Prince of Denmark, and yet he admired his diction and his playing, and declared that he well deserved the applause with which the spectators greeted him. The parts of the Ghost, Laertes, Polonius, and the Gravedigger were, in his opinion, very ably filled; while Miss Cleveland and Miss Margaret Cooper played the Queen and Ophelia most satisfactorily, the latter lady being especially commendable for the talent, charm, and poesy which she threw over her *rôle*. M. Vitu thinks that many French actors would do well to go and see our countrymen struggling against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."—*Era*, August, 1873.

but owing to the want of proper direction, and also proper appreciation ; for after all, the French never did, and never will, believe that there are actors outside their own country, particularly English actors.

“ I was passing a swell stationer's, and seeing an example of a very fine sheet of letter-paper, with a wonderful crest upon it, an idea occurred to me. I went in, and after a time came out with that impressive piece of stationery. With the



MR. JOHN RYDER.

assistance of my travelling companions, I wrote a letter to Ryder, which, elegantly translated into French, I had beautifully transcribed upon that superb sheet of letter-paper, which was then duly folded up, sealed, and delivered by special messenger. The letter, which was inscribed with a name not unknown in the country of France, was something to the effect that the writer had observed with great pleasure that Mr. Ryder was about to appear on the Paris stage as 'Hamlet,'

supported by a powerful English company. The writer had seen Mr. Ryder in London, had always greatly admired him as an interpreter of Shakspeare; and it was also with satisfaction that he noted among the company the name of Mr. Swinburne, whom he had also, in company with his friend, Mr. Rothschild, seen upon more than



RYDER AND TOOLE IN PARIS—A LITTLE JEST.

one occasion. He was quite sure that Paris would welcome artists of their great and deserved renown, and, so far as he could help their enterprise, he should commit himself to the adventure with pride and pleasure. Nothing tended more to cement the friendship of the two great countries than an interchange of artistic entertainments, and he added, by the way, that he had just purchased

a little château a few miles from Paris, where he would be very pleased to welcome Mr. Ryder and any of the leading members of his company—indeed, so far as their professional engagements would permit, he would be glad if they would make this château their home during their stay in Paris. Meanwhile, he desired them, if possible, to meet him that evening in the courtyard of the Grand Hotel at about half-past eleven. He would then communicate his views and suggestions to them, which he hoped would advance the prospects of their visit; although, apart from any service he could render, he was quite sure they would meet with a great success.

“I only heard afterwards that on the night in question there was a special dress rehearsal for *Hamlet*, the close of which was considerably hastened in order that Mr. Ryder might keep an important engagement at the Grand Hotel. ‘It’s all right, ladies and gentlemen,’ he said. ‘Have no fear. We have had our little troubles and difficulties, but the thing will be a great go.’ Whereupon he drew from his breast-pocket an important-looking letter, which he tapped in a knowing way, remarking, ‘Here it is: here is the positive assurance; Paris is going to take us up—English and French. You’ll see, Swinburne, come with me: you must join me in this appointment.’

“However, this is by the way. I only heard it from a member of the company some time afterwards in London.

“At half-past eleven, Frank, myself, and Love-day sauntered from our rooms into the courtyard of the Grand Hotel. There, sitting together at one of the little round tables, were Ryder and Swinburne; Ryder evidently laying down the law to Swinburne, Swinburne receiving the law in his

usual gloomy fashion. Swinburne was never a cheerful man—we used to call him ‘Melancholy Tom;’ but Ryder, as you know, was a noisy, genial, outspoken, overpowering kind of good fellow.

“All at once Ryder saw me, and starting up, exclaimed, ‘Why, Johnnie, who’d have thought of seeing you here!’

“My natural response was, ‘And who’d have thought of seeing you here!’

“‘Me!’ he exclaimed. ‘Why, I appear on Monday as ‘Hamlet.’ I’ve got a company here, have been rehearsing several days—dress rehearsal to-night, in fact.’

“Then we sat down and talked over his enterprise. Loveday and Frank joined us, and I suggested a fear as to his success; said I didn’t think the French would accept an English interpretation of Shakspeare—expressed my great wonder that they condescended even to play Shakspeare themselves. But Ryder assured me that there was no doubt about the success of the present venture, anyhow—he had full assurance of it.

“Tom Swinburne looked at his watch, and muttered something about an appointment overdue. Ryder comforted him with the remark that these swells had so many engagements that they must be allowed a little grace.

“We continued to talk. Time slipped away. They grew very anxious.

“I invited them to supper. They said no, they must wait to keep an appointment. And then, I suppose by way of taking a friendly interest in my proceedings, Ryder said: ‘And what may be your business in Paris?’

“I began to feel a little sorry for the disappointment I had prepared for them; and as I couldn’t stay and give them a lift on the night of *Hamlet*, I began to show my hand.

“ ‘The fact is,’ I said, ‘ I have been purchasing a little château a few miles outside Paris—’

“ ‘A what?’ said Ryder.

“ ‘A château.’

“ ‘What do you mean—purchasing a little château?’

“ ‘Well, that is exactly what I do mean. I have been buying a little château a few miles outside Paris, and I shall be pleased to welcome you and any of the leading members of your company—indeed, so far as your professional engagements will permit, I hope you will make this château your home during your stay in Paris.’

“ ‘Oh! you scoundrel!’ exclaimed Ryder, producing the letter. ‘Then, this is your work! Oh, you ruffian! you double-dyed villain!’ adding in the same breath, ‘Not a word of it outside this company, on your soul, Toole, until we are well out of Paris.’

“ I gave him the pledge; we had supper together, and I need not say we parted good friends. Ryder and Swinburne kept their own counsel with the company, maintaining to the last that success was assured; but afterwards finding an explanation for the want of success in the fact that Paris had failed to appreciate the Ryder’s subtle impersonation of the melancholy Dane.”

VIII.

“ I REMEMBER some years ago,” said Toole, as we took an early walk the next morning, prior to leaving York for Whitby, where he was to play that night the opening engagement of his autumn tour, “attending the afternoon service at Chester. I never go to a cathedral city without finding my way to the afternoon service, and I hope I go in a thoroughly religious frame of mind, though I

am more especially fond of the music, and think it most impressive, most soul-stirring. Lingered to listen to the piece they play you out with—no, I don't mean that, it is the voluntary—I noticed



"I THOUGHT HE MUST BE A BISHOP."

a very dignified gentleman pausing too. It was a small congregation, and I could not help thinking that even most of them had come to enjoy the music. The tall, handsome old gentleman attracted my attention. He was dressed in black—one of the long coats worn by the clergy; he

carried in one hand a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, in the other a sober-looking book bound in dark, rich cloth ; I thought it might be a missal ; he was a remarkably dignified man, with white hair, a shiny hat, had gaiters to his boots, and walked very quietly ; I thought he must be a bishop out of work ; no, I don't mean that, a bishop or a dean, say, or some other great dignitary, in residence who is not acting—I mean preaching—but who likes to go to the cathedral and set a good example. When the organ ceased I walked away ; so did several others of the congregation, and so likewise did the bishop—I felt sure he was a bishop—and I was surprised to find him evidently making gradually towards me. The next moment he was by my side, and the next he had smiled and passed me, remarking as he did so, and in a very confidential kind of way, ' You'll have a better audience than this to-night, Mr. Toole.' ”

IX.

WE had been advised to see St. Mary's Church before we left York, and had arrived at the gates as Toole concluded his reminiscence of Chester. There are several St. Marys in York, and I do not recall which it was, the architectural and antiquarian interest of the place being rather eclipsed by one of those impromptu comedies on life's real stage which make a trip with Toole sometimes “ as good as a play.” We entered an old-fashioned kind of yard before reaching the church. There were what appeared to be almshouses on one side and the church on the other. It was very quiet, and, the morning being dull, rather gloomy. Several gravestones, which at some time or another had been removed in the course of local improvements, had been propped against the

houses, and at last had settled into the earth as if the houses were mausoleums and the stones their records. We had to apply to an old lady living in one of the houses for the key of the church.

"Odd place for tombstones," said Toole.

"Varry," she said. "When they asphalted t'yard they moved t'stones and put 'em there, and forgot to put 'em back."

"Dear me," said Toole, turning a serious face to me, taking out a pocket-book and making a note. "This must be seen to. Meanwhile, we will look at the church."

"Varry well," she said, with an air of familiar indifference, as much as to say, "You know best. I've no objection. Here's the key."

She was a very matter-of-fact person, no nonsense about her; fearless in the performance of her duty, independent in her criticism of others, a business-like, sturdy old dame. She opened the church doors; she showed us an old font. Toole suggested that it was not in a good place for examination. She said he was "not t'first as had said so." He made several other remarks suggestive of a rearrangement of various things, which elicited an important fact, namely, that the vicar of the parish had not been in the church for over six months. Toole whispered a "thought so" to me, and our guide twirled her big key between her finger and thumb, and in her keen way spotted the fact that Toole was evidently a person in official authority connected with the Church, an Ecclesiastical Commissioner, or something of the kind. Thereupon she began to fence with his questions, though she did admit that a vicar ought not to leave his parish for six months at a time, and she was willing to allow that there ought to be no disputes nor misunderstandings in a Christian community. At the same time she said it

was no business of hers what the vicar did or what tenets he preached ; she did her duty, and her life and that of her old man was known to their neighbours ; "as for what ye call Church discipline, I donnat know what it is, and I donnat wish to say anything agen nobody ; w'en all gotten our fauts, and there let it rest !"

"But I *wish* you to speak your mind freely," said Toole, turning to me and remarking in a loud whisper something to this effect (we were in the porch now)—"Official duties—not always agreeable—honest old person teaches me—reprehensible neglect—vicar must be seen to"—(then quite privately, "Let us go out, don't like joking in the church, though some people hereabout evidently quarrel in it, which is much worse"), and by this time the creaking lock once more shut in the ancient font.

In the yard, the tombstones leaning against the humble but somewhat picturesque dwellings were referred to as evidence of a want of respect both to the living and the dead.

"You would like them removed," said Toole.

"Well," she said, "it isn't pleasant having gravestones at one's front door and leaning again one's hoose."

"No ; I wish I had had your complaint before me when the change was made."

"Well, we didna' loike to say much, you see, because they said as it ud only be temporary."

"Just so, just so," said Toole, with very much of the manner of the soap-boiler in *The Upper Crust*, "just so."

By this time one or two of the neighbours came to their doors, and the keeper of the key's old man.

"I'm not one as is fond of complaining," she

said, now conscious of an audience before whom she would like to stand well, "but gravestones as companions isna' a thing as ye'd take to by choice."

"Certainly not," said Toole, "they shall be removed. When will it be convenient for the cart to fetch them away?"

"Oh, any time," said the dame, looking round at her audience for their approving nods, which came with much promptitude.

"Next week," said the comedian, making a fresh note in his book. "And you are pretty comfortable in your homes?" looking at the rest, though no one but the lady with the key ventured to speak; they evidently thought she was getting on so well, it would be a pity to interfere.

"Why, we mustna complain. Some folks think we doonnat pay rent; but we do!"

"Indeed," said Toole, "it is so long since any of these matters have come before me that—I was under the impression that these were almshouses, that in fact they belonged to our Trust, so to speak."

"That may be," she replied, "but we has to pay rent, for all that; it isna much, but when times is hard—"

"I see," said Toole, "you do not wish to pay rent."

"Yo've hit it," said the dame.

"You are not singular in that," said Toole, "there are quite a number of persons who do not wish to pay rent, and some who actually refuse to do so. We must see to your case; but one thing at a time; always a mistake to be in a hurry."

"Yes, sir, and thank you; they do say in these parts, 'moast haste less speed,' but it isna often we'n pleasure of seein' one of t' Trustees feace to

feace, and one as'll listen to what poor folks 'as gotten to say"—a remark which drew forth a murmur of applause from the bystanders.

"Just so," said Toole; "well, I do not know what to say about the rent, but I will look into the matter; as for these pieces of antiquity, the cart shall see to them at once."

"Shall my mester be digging 'em up ready?"

"No," said Toole, "wait for the waggon—I mean the cart, and meanwhile, here is a little 'doosoar,' make what use you please of it, save it up towards the rent, whitewash your places with it, or turn it into a little extra tea," whereupon he dropped a coin into the old dame's hand, and we said "good day" to the wondering neighbours.

"Hope they will not be too much disappointed about the cart—hope they won't wait too long for the waggon, and we'll all take a ride. But it is too bad, isn't it, to go and dig up a churchyard, asphalt the court, and leave the stones propped up against the houses? Odd old lady, strong face; she wouldn't flinch, whatever her duty might be. Did you notice how she nursed that key—reminded me of Durdles, somehow—and did you notice that all the women wrapped their arms up in their aprons? The old man hasn't much to say about the rent or anything else, eh?—a wonderful old dame!"



XII.

CHATS BY THE WAY, AND JESTS.

"And Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do"—
The new, true, and impromptu comedy of "Tip it with Green"—Sothern and the ironmonger—Mr. Lee and life in New York—Florence and Sothern—Reminiscences of

Johnnie Clarke—Professional jealousies—"Dot" at Newcastle-on-Tyne—"Irving tells a capital story of Toole"—A politic driver—"The Bell of the Abyss"—Travel in England and America—George Loveday's opinion of Toole.

I.

At last it was time for our train to Whitby. We were early. The train was late. We had bought all the newspapers, and tipped all the porters. Our carriage-door was locked. We were to have no companions. Every moment we were expecting the train to start, and every moment it did nothing of the kind. "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." We made several inquiries about the delay of the train; it was quite a remarkable delay; it lasted nearly half an hour. At last Toole, always bent on amusing me or studying character, said we must "do something." They were painting the railway station (no reference is intended to a famous picture of a rival station in town), and doing the work with much elegance of design and detail. The company is proud of its station at York, as well it may be, and they had evidently resolved that the art spirit of the age should not be neglected in its decoration. The pillars supporting the magnificent roof were of a greyish tint of light blue, with a band of magenta at the base, and here and there at given points of the pillars themselves a similar band breaking into light filagree ornamentation. The armorial bearings of the company were emblazoned on pillars and columns, and altogether the work was of a very artistic character. A painter with a small brush, almost like a camel-hair pencil, was finishing the more delicate details of the most important of the decorations; he was earnestly

engaged upon a piece of foliated work that ran round one of the pillars.

Toole called a boy, gave him some coppers, requested him to jog the painter's elbow and ask him—referring to the decorative scroll—"if he was going to tip it with green?"

We were too far away, of course, to hear anything, but we could see the painter offering some kind of explanation to the boy, the boy pointing to our carriage.



MR. TOOLE AND THE STATION-MASTER—"TIP IT WITH GREEN."

The boy returned, and said the painter had "no orders to tip it with green."

Thereupon Toole appealed to the guard, who was an exceptionally anxious-looking person.

"It is always a difficult thing," Toole said to him, with a grave face, "to make alterations when you settle the colour of a particular style of decoration; but the directors have come to the

conclusion that the scroll-work round the pillars is too plain,—wants variety; and they have decided to have it tipped with green. I wish you would tell the painter there to tip it with green."

"Well," said the guard, "I've no time to spare, sir, but I'll just speak to the station-master." Before Toole could interpose, the guard rushed to the other end of the platform and sent the station-master, a courteous and imposing-looking official, to our carriage.

I was beginning to laugh, and to wonder how my friend would get out of this unexpected difficulty.

"Keep your countenance," he said, "it's all right."

The station-master came up.

"Oh, about the painting of the station?" said Toole.

"Yes, sir; what is it?"

"Well, we had a meeting yesterday, and we think it would be wise to relieve the decoration with a little green. You see it's rather monotonous, that blue and magenta; and although the contract has been given out, and actually begun, we reconsidered it yesterday on good advice—I was speaking to the inspector—and we have had a good deal of—of—of talk about it. A little thing makes such a difference, doesn't it?"

"Well, it does," said the station-master.

"And we thought that if a little orange or green were introduced into the filagree work on the pillars—it would be an improvement. Of course you can never quite tell what the effect will be until you see a thing, but I am quite sure it would be better if it was tipped with green. Will you be good enough to tell the man there who is at

work—an excellent man, knows his business, I'm sure—will you just tell him to *tip it with green?* ”

“Certainly,” said the station-master, going off with an official stride to the painter. We watched the encounter, noting the action of the station-master, who was evidently explaining Toole's views.

The painter paused for a moment or two in his work and made some response to the station-master, who returned to us.

“Well,” said Toole, “what does he say?”

“He says the foreman of the works is away just now, gone to his dinner, and he has no orders to introduce any other colour; but he will speak to the foreman about it.”

“Ah,” said Toole, “thank you very much. Shall you see the foreman of the works this afternoon?”

“Yes, sir, I shall.”

“Well, now, will you be good enough to jog his memory about it; and tell him we wish it to be tipped with green.”

“I will, sir, certainly,” said the station-master.

The train moved quietly out of the station and brought us alongside the painter. As we passed him, Toole, with a broad grin on his face, called out, “Hi! you there! painter!”

The man turned round a little angrily.

“*Tip it with green!*” said Toole.

The painter laid down his brush, looked a trifle savage, then gradually relapsed into a broad grin, and waved his brush at us, as he realized the situation and caught on the artificial breeze created by the passing train Toole's parting words: “*Tip it with green!*”¹

¹ Mr. H. Werner writes to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* describing another railway incident:—“Mr. Toole was

II.

THIS little jest at the expense of the York station-master set us both recalling the practical jokes of Sothern,² some of which are characterized by a

travelling a short time ago on the Great Eastern line from Ipswich to Cambridge. The train was a slow one, and the journey, in consequence, very tedious. When Bury St. Edmund's was reached, the comedian was thoroughly wearied out by the length of time the train was delayed at the station. Calling a porter, he asked in a very bland manner for the station-master, who, all politeness, bustled up to the door of the carriage in which sat Mr. Toole, looking as solemn as a judge. 'What is it, sir?' asked the official. 'At what time is the funeral to take place?' inquired Mr. Toole. 'Funeral, sir? Whose funeral?' inquired the now wondering station-master. 'Whose funeral!' continued Mr. Toole; 'why, have we not come to Bury St. Edmund's?' Exit station-master in a huff."

² "My theatrical recollections of New York include, at Laura Keene's, the production of a play destined to attain celebrity as *Our American Cousin*, in which I saw Sothern act 'Lord Dundreary' for the very first time in his life; and some years afterwards, when we first met at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, I gave him a copy of the original play-bill which I chanced to have kept. Jefferson, since world-famous as 'Rip Van Winkle,' was the 'Asa Trenchard.' The whole performance was a very different one from that presented later at the Haymarket; but beyond all dispute, it was 'Dundreary' who made the play, always a very bad one, although through Sothern it enjoyed the then greatest run on record. Sothern, at the reading of the piece, refused his part, and only on being given *carte blanche* to 'write it up' and do with it what he pleased, consented to appear in it. The odd stammer and eccentric walk which he introduced he had previously tried with success in small Canadian towns, where he began his Western career as 'Sir Frederick Blount' in *Money*; its inspiration being really due to some funny antics of a nigger troupe known as Bryant's Minstrels. The long claret-coloured Noah's Ark coat which he wore on the first night he borrowed from Dion Boucicault, who was then acting at Niblo's; this dress was only once changed throughout the comedy, and then for a costume which would not have disgraced Wright in an old Adelphi farce—the coal-black whiskers were an exaggeration of the peg-top fashion then the rage, which also governed largely the cut of trousers and coat-sleeves. There was not for a long time any Brother

droll humour. As previously suggested, Sothern's fooling now and then overstepped the line of good taste, but it was always instinct with a keen sense of the dramatic effect of humorous incongruity.

Mrs. John Wood told me the following story of Sothern. They were both playing at Birmingham. She met him accidentally in the neighbourhood of New Street. They were near an ironmonger's shop, when he shook hands with her and bade her good morning.

"Would you mind going in here with me? I want to make a little purchase," he said.

She accompanied him.

He went up to the counter and said, "I want Macaulay's 'History of England.'"

The assistant said, "We do not sell books, sir; this is an ironmonger's shop."

"Well, I'm not particular," said Sothern, pretending to be deaf. "I don't care whether it is bound in calf or Russia."

"But this is not a bookseller's," shouted the assistant.

"All right," said Sothern. "Wrap it up neatly. I want to have it sent down to the hotel. It's for a present I wish to make to a relative. Put it up nicely."

"We don't keep it," shouted the assistant, getting red in the face; while Mrs. Wood stepped aside and took a chair in another part of the shop, almost overcome with suppressed laughter at the

Sam's letter or any allusion to that fraternal personage. The part grew slowly bit by bit, and instead of being exaggerated into an impossibility, as it might have been by an inferior actor, was, in fact, refined nightly in action and costume with the judgment and painstaking labour which always characterized this admirable comedian, of whom I shall hope later on to speak."—Mr. Bancroft's Narrative, in "Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft on and off the Stage."

cheerful, frank expression of Sothern's face, and the mad, puzzled look of the shopkeeper's assistant

"Do it up as if it were for your own mother. I don't want anything better than that," said Sothern. "I would like to write my name on the fly-leaf."

"Sir," bawled the assistant at the top of his voice, "can't you see we do not keep books."

"Very well," said Sothern, quite undisturbed



MRS. JOHN WOOD.

(From an American photograph.)

at the emotion he was creating, "I will wait for it."

Under the impression that his customer was either stone-deaf or a lunatic, the assistant bounced off to the further end of the shop, and asked his master to come. "I can do nothing with him: I think he must be off his head." Whereupon the principal marched up to the spot

where Sothern was standing, and asked very loudly, "What is it, sir! What do you desire?"

"I want to buy a file," says Sothern, quietly; "a plain file, about four or five inches in length."

"Certainly," said the principal, with a withering look at his assistant, and producing at once the article which had been asked for.

"Are you ready?" said Sothern to Mrs. Wood. She was not as ready as usual.

III.

"ONE of the most elaborate of Sothern's jokes, said Toole, "was the little affair he arranged for the improvement of Mr. Philip Lee's knowledge of American life. Lee, as you know, was the husband of Miss Neilson. When first he went to America with his wife, he frequently remarked that New York didn't seem to him any more uncivilized than London. He had heard a great deal of the wild doings of the American cities. Mr. Sothern, indeed, had particularly cautioned him in regard to New York. He had not exactly described Central Park to him as a prairie abounding with wild game, but he had depicted to him the possible dangers which always beset a stranger in the streets of New York.

"Mr. Lee, at a little supper party, told Sothern he believed he had been chaffing him: he didn't think people went about armed in New York, nor did he see the possibilities of danger against which he had been warned.

"Sothern, in reply, said of course Lee was in very good society, had been introduced to good clubs and good people, and was not in the way of seeing what was called 'American life;' but it was, nevertheless, a common practice for men to shoot at each other over dinner; get up sudden quarrels, and have fights quite as tragic as were

frequently reported in 'the far West.' Would he care to see a little New York life? He and his friend Florence would like to introduce him to a few remarkable characters. Lee accepted the invitation with pleasure.

"A dinner was arranged at a down-town restaurant, the guests specially invited and rehearsed. They consisted of one or two actors and a couple of leading minstrels of the Moore and Burgess class, who were both dressed and armed for the parts they had to play. When they sat down to dinner, one of these men drew from the back of his collar a formidable bowie-knife and laid it beside his plate; the other took out a six-shooter in an ordinary way and placed it on his right hand. One of the actors spoke of having just come off an awkward journey, and deposited what he called a bull-dozer beneath his chair. There was a good deal of noisy discussion over dinner, particularly between Mr. Florence and the gentleman who had just come off the awkward journey. The *menu* having been pretty well exhausted, Florence reached over towards the traveller for the pepper-box; whereupon the awkward customer, leaping to his feet, said, 'Put that pepper-box down!'

"Florence made a scoffing remark: whereupon the other guest stooped for his revolver, and in an instant Florence, drawing a bowie-knife, leaped across the table to the attack; whereupon there was a general rising. The gas went out; several pistol-shots were fired; there was a great crash of chairs and plates, and evidently a most tragic scene was being enacted in the dark.

"In the midst of it, however, most of the guests disappeared; and when the waiters came in, Mr. Lee was found under the table, unhurt, but in a state of considerable nervous exhaustion, and

ready, it is said, to get out of that 'cussed country' forthwith."

IV.

FLORENCE, going home late one night, found upon his dining-room table a very tender note in a lady's handwriting. The signature was unknown to him, and after carefully considering the epistle, he came to the conclusion that his friend Sothern was the author of it. Mrs. Florence had fortunately retired before its arrival. Florence immediately wrote, and despatched by a messenger—one of the pleasant facilities for communication you have in New York—a furious letter to Sothern, from whose persecution, as he regarded it, in another matter, he was keenly suffering at the moment.

"Your conduct," he wrote, "is neither that of an actor nor a gentleman."

In the morning he regretted the letter he had written; but the messenger-boys of New York are almost as swift as the telegraph. His letter had been duly received.

A few weeks afterwards Florence met Sothern in Union Square.

"How d'you do, Florence?" said Sothern. "You're quite a stranger."

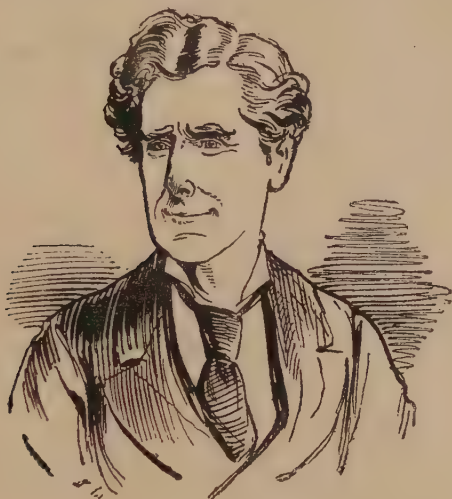
"That's how I have been feeling," said Florence. "Ever since I wrote that letter to you I concluded it would put an end to our friendship."

"That letter—what letter? Oh, yes, I remember: something about neither an actor nor a gentleman? But there was no name at the bottom; I remember now; so guessing it was intended for Boucicault, I re-directed it and sent it on."³

³ There is a capital story of Florence—an episode of the actor's boyish days in "Henry Irving's Impressions of America,"

V.

"You knew Johnnie Clarke, of course," said Toole, after a long pause, during which time the North-Eastern train had been running along at



MR. JOHN CLARKE.

the rate of sixty miles an hour through pleasant, restful scenery.

which is worth remembering. Florence was a very young man, a boy, in fact, and was filling one of his first engagements on any stage at the Bowery Theatre. A girl about his own age (who is now a wife, and a woman of position in New York) in the company, was his first love. His adoration was mingled with the most gallant respect. Their salaries were about from ten to twelve dollars each a week. For a time they only played in the first piece; for in those days two plays a night were more popular on the American stage than they are now. One evening, at about nine o'clock, after pulling himself together for so daring an effort in his course of courtship, he asked her if she would go to an adjacent restaurant and take something to eat. The house was kept by a person of the name of Shields, or Shiells. The supper-room was arranged something after the manner of the old London coffee-houses. It had compartments divided off from each

"Oh, yes," I said, "a clever, eccentric comedian."⁴

other. Into one of these Florence escorted his sweetheart. He asked her what she would take. After some hesitation, and a good deal of blushing (more probably on his part than hers), she said oyster-stew and lemonade. He concluded to have the same—an incongruous mixture, perhaps; but they were boy and girl. Florence was more than once on the eve of declaring his undying passion and asking her to name the day. Presently, supper being ended, they rose to go, and Florence discovered that he had come away without his purse, or rather, his pocket-book, as they call it here. He explained to the Irish waiter (and Florence I suspect is himself of Irish descent), who cut him short by saying, "Money? Oh, that won't do; you're not going to damage the moral character of the house, bringing of your girls here, and then saying you can't pay the bill." "How dare you, sir!" exclaimed Florence, the girl shrinking back. "Dare! Oh, bedad, if you put that in the way I'll just give you a piece of my mind;" and he did. It was a dirty piece, which hurt the poor young fellow. "Take me to your master," he said. The girl was crying; Florence was heartbroken. The master was not less rude than the man. "Very well," said the boy; "here's my watch and ring. I will call and redeem them in the morning with the money. I am a member of the Bowery company, and I will ask the manager to call and see you also. Your conduct is shameful." "By heaven, it is," exclaimed a stranger, who, with some others, was smoking near the desk of the clerk or landlord. "It is infamous, cannot you understand that this young gentleman is a good, honest young fellow? —, you ought to apologize to him, and kick that waiter-fellow out. Don't frown at me, sir. Give the young gentleman his watch and ring. Here is a fifty-dollar bill; take what he owes, and give me the change." The stranger was a well-dressed gentleman, with white hair; not old, but of venerable appearance. They all went out together—Florence, the young lady, and their benefactor. As they stepped into the street, Florence said, "I cannot sufficiently thank you, sir. Where shall I call and leave the money for you?" "Oh, don't trouble yourself about it," said the benevolent gentleman; "your surly friend won't make much out of the transaction,—it was a counterfeit bill that he changed for me."

⁴ "Both the play-going public, who have lost the services of an admirable comedian, and the theatrical profession, who will miss the companionship of a widely-esteemed friend, must receive with the deepest regret the intelligence that this de-

“The same!” exclaimed my genial companion in a tragic tone. “Poor Johnnie, he was a curious

servedly popular actor is no longer among us. Since the death of his wife Mr. John Clarke had greatly suffered in health, and during the last two months his illness, arising from a deeply-seated affection of the lungs, increased to such an extent that but small hope could be entertained of his ultimate recovery. For some days past those who had called to see him had brought back reports of increasing fits of coughing and rapidly diminishing strength; and on Thursday morning, at half-past eight, he expired, at his residence, 15, Torriano Avenue, Camden Road. His age was about fifty. In early life Mr. John Clarke showed a strong predilection for the stage, and eventually he gave up a photographic establishment in Farringdon Street, which he had opened with some prospect of success, and went as ‘general utility’ to serve country theatres in succession. His first appearance before a London audience was in January, 1852, at the Strand Theatre, then under the management of Mr Allcroft. The part he played was ‘Master Toby,’ in Wilkins’s play of *Civilization*. During a speculative management at Drury Lane he made a further trial of his abilities, appearing on October 7th, 1852, as ‘Fathom,’ in *The Hunchback*, but, the season only lasting a few nights, he returned to the provinces, and reappeared in September, 1855, at the Strand, taking the position of principal comedian, and making a notable hit, as ‘Ikey, the Jew,’ in Mr. Leicester Buckingham’s burlesque of *Belphegor*, produced in September, 1856. At Christmas, 1857, he was engaged by Mr. E. T. Smith, for Drury Lane, and appeared as ‘Old Proverb,’ in the pantomime of *Little Jack Horner*. Returning to the Strand in 1858, when Miss Swanborough had raised the theatre to more importance than it had previously acquired, Mr. John Clarke established himself as a prominent member of a really excellent company, and at this establishment he remained several years, identifying himself with a memorable series of characters in the extravaganzas written by Francis Talfourd and H. J. Byron, and making a great hit in such pieces as *The Last of the Pig-tails*, *The Bonny Fishwife*, and *The Goose with the Golden Eggs*. In the burlesque parts of ‘Isaac,’ in *The Maid and the Magpie*; ‘Varney,’ in *Kenilworth*; ‘Quasimodo,’ in *Esmeralda*; ‘Beau-seant,’ in *The Lady of Lyons*; and ‘Gesler,’ in *William Tell*, his memory will be long preserved by those who were frequenters of the theatre during the brightest period of its prosperity. As a grotesque singer and dancer he had rare advantages, and his embodiments were always characterized by singular care bestowed on what is technically called ‘the making-up

little chap. He played 'Ikey, the Jew,' in *Belphegor*. His 'Isaac' in the burlesque of *The Maid and the Magpie*; his 'Quasimodo' in *Esmeralda*; and 'Beauséant,' in the burlesque of *The Lady of Lyons*, were all excellent.

"He was quite a character in his way; touchy, simple-minded, thought himself rather knowing, but was very transparent in his foibles. His house was a sort of half-way house in Park Village, between the Strand and Haverstock Hill. Andrew Halliday, Billington, Charles Dickens, jun., and myself, and some other friends would occasionally drive home together, and drop Johnnie on the way. We always had a bit of fun with him. He was very earnest about his acting, and had a great belief in himself. If it was moderately early, we would manage to pay him a compliment or two, and he would invite us in.

"Then one of us would remark that Webster's 'Triplet' or Dillon's 'Belphegor' were wonderful histrionic studies; or that Robson in *The Porter's Knot* would be a living memory when we were all gone; and, to get nearer home, we would mention some low comedian or character-actor who had been sustaining some part in Clarke's line.

"Clarke would interrupt us with a suggestion that he had done something also in that way; but

Subsequently he accepted an engagement with Mr. Benjamin Webster, at the Adelphi, joined the Olympic company and made a marked impression as 'Quilp'; acted for some time at the Globe Theatre; played at Covent Garden during the Christmas season, when *The Babes in the Wood* was produced; for two years he was prominently associated with the Prince of Wales's Theatre; and finally appeared at the Criterion, where he performed with great success in several new pieces, and in the revival of *The Porter's Knot*. In 1873 Mr. John Clarke married the clever actress, Miss Teresa Furtado, who expired at the early age of thirty-two, August 9th, 1877."—*The Era*, February 20th, 1879.

we would carefully avoid all reference to him ; and all of a sudden, unable to bear it any longer, he would say, ' Well, boys, I am sorry I can't invite you to have a parting drink ; whisky's locked up ; must say good-night ; ' and he would lead the way to the door. But as we had come for the purpose of remaining a little while, and taking that parting drink, Halliday would lay his hand on Clarke's shoulder and say, ' But your " Ikey, the Jew," Johnny, will be hard to beat,' and I would add, ' But what do you say of his " Quilp " ? '

" He would melt under this, and say, ' Oh, well, I think " Quilp " was not so bad. Don't go, boys ; stay and have a drink. What's your hurry ? It isn't late.'

" And we would all return pleasantly to his quaint little dining-room, and spend the remainder of the evening.

" Clarke married Miss Furtado, a bright, pretty, clever actress. When she was playing ' Esmeralda,' he took down a goat for her on the first evening. I remember his telling me that he had a regular fight with it in the cab. He thought it would have butted him to death. With assistance, however, he succeeded in landing the attraction at the theatre, with what result I don't remember."

VI.

Apropos of these reminiscences of Clarke, Toole said, " The jealousies in the profession of the stage are, I suppose, not more serious than the jealousies in other walks of life ; but they are sometimes more inconvenient, if not more amusing.

" Years ago at Newcastle-on-Tyne,⁵ when I was on tour with *Dot* and other attractive plays, Irving

⁵ " H. W. R." writes as follows to the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* :—" I have been much interested in Mr. Toole's

playing 'John Peerybingle' and Brough 'Tackleton,' we were considerably upset one evening after the second act of *Dot*, with the announcement that the lady who played 'Bertha, the Blind Girl,' had been taken suddenly ill, and could not finish the piece. She lay in her dressing-room in a dead faint, and although at the outset of her illness she had spoken and said she could not go on again, nothing now had any effect upon her. We sent for a doctor, and in the meantime set about trying

'Reminiscences,' and this week's contribution reminds me of some circumstances which occurred on the occasion of the comedian's visit to Newcastle in 1870, when he got himself into rather an awkward scrape. Much to my disappointment. Mr. Toole has not mentioned it, though even his multitudinous experiences of scrapes can hardly have obliterated the Newcastle one from his memory.

"He had come down to fulfil a week's engagement at the Tyne Theatre. For a fortnight or three weeks before, the hoardings and bill-posting stations in the town had been placarded with large diamond-shaped bills with deep blue or red borders, bearing one word. I have forgotten what the word was, but we will say it was 'Arachne.' Preliminary advertisements of that sort were not so common then as they have been since. Curiosity was aroused, and every one was on the tip-toe of expectation as to the sequel. On the Quayside, and wherever young men did congregate, it became a password, and many a good joke resulted therefrom. Two or three days after Mr. Toole's arrival the people were surprised one morning to see a fresh set of bills out. Printed at the top, in large letters, was the mystic word, 'Arachne,' and below, 'Toole's benefit at the Tyne Theatre to-night.'

"That night the popular comedian had a bumper. At the close of the performance, in obedience to the vociferous applause of the immense audience, Mr. Toole came before the curtain. After thanking them for the reception they had given him, he said he was sorry to tell them that he had got into serious trouble. He came to the town and found the public mind in a state of tension, and in order to relieve them of their suspense he simply appropriated the mysterious 'ad.' He had been threatened with all sorts of pains and penalties, but if the public of Newcastle thought he had wronged them, he would be glad to come down and play for the benefit of the Infirmary. He retired amidst the most enthusiastic applause."

to fill her place. The part ought to have been understudied, but it was not ; there was a lady in the company who was not playing that night ; she happened to be in front with her husband ; she was sent for. I asked her to go on for 'Bertha,' and said I would give her the words as we went along. In the first place she said nothing would induce her to do anything for the lady who was ill ; but there was nothing in the world she would not do for me.

"At the same time, she would consent to do nothing but read the part. I pointed out to her how absurd it would be for a blind girl to read a part. Irving, in a quiet way, said it would certainly be a novelty. However, she was obdurate, and Irving made the announcement to the audience that the lady who had played the blind girl had been taken suddenly ill ; and under the circumstances Miss So-and-so had kindly consented to read the part. The audience applauded, and seemed quite satisfied. Irving came from the front of the curtain remarking that it was, to use a classic phrase, 'a rum go ;' but it was a much rummer go than any of us foresaw.

"Under treatment the fainting lady came round, and the moment she learned that her rival was going on in her place, she leaped to her feet and emphatically said, 'Never, never !'

"I was on the stage as 'Caleb Plummer,' and of course knew nothing of this, but when the time arrived for the pathetic entrance of the girl to myself and 'Dot,' I heard quite a disturbance at the wing ; the audience heard it too.

"'You shall not go on.' 'I must.' 'You shall not, I say !' 'But I have been announced.' 'I don't care ; I am better, and I am going on !'

"Then there was something like a scuffle, and the original blind girl, for whose illness we had

apologized, came bounding on with a look of defiance in her very widely-opened eyes. The audience laughed heartily and applauded vociferously, and when the baggage began to speak I believe she winked at the house, as much as to say, 'They don't get over me;' and the play went on. I need not say the spirit and intention of the scene was spoiled; but the audience was very good, and after all it was better to play the scene anyhow than have the blind girl read it. And as I said, although 'the good Samaritan' would do anything for me, she would not for any one in the world walk on for a part she did not know without the book, though she had seen it played scores of times."

VII.

IRVING tells a capital story of Toole. I heard him narrate it over an American dinner-table, by way of showing that our cousins do not entirely monopolize the instinct of advertising. He has since then contributed it as "a light fantastic tale" to the *Clover Leaves* in America, "not only because it exhibits an interesting trait in my old friend's character, but also because it deserves to be an imperishable illustration of English manners in an American volume, to which in the course of the next five hundred years the historian of our present civilization will naturally turn for his most instructive facts." This is the story:—

"A vast amount of years ago—it must be fully fourteen—I was playing in Byron's drama, *Uncle Dick's Darling*, at the Gaiety Theatre, in London. My dear old friend, J. L. Toole, was the bright particular star of that entertainment, and Adelaide Neilson was the 'Darling.' Now, my friend Toole, amongst many brilliant qualities, has a notable faculty for business, and in the invention

of captivating posters and insinuating handbills he had at that time no equal. Pray don't think he cares for such arts now, for he long ago discovered their vanity, when after playing for a week in a certain place he met the local bill-printer, to whom he had paid a lot of money, and who greeted him with: 'Hallo, Mr. Toole! How long have you been here?' Still, before this awakening his activity in advertising was extreme. One of his rivals, an eminent tragedian, was once much moved when leaving a town to find his posters covered with the announcement: 'Toole is coming;' and the climax of torment was reached when, going to bed that night, he found this stimulating legend pinned on his pillow.

"Well, my indefatigable friend was not content with playing superbly in *Uncle Dick's Darling*. He busied himself with all manner of devices to popularize the performance. He never went anywhere without a bundle of labels in his pocket, and if he happened to be in a church or a police-court, or any other place of fashionable resort, he was sure to leave behind him a touching memento sticking in some prominent place, to the effect that J. L. Toole was to be seen at the Gaiety Theatre in *Uncle Dick's Darling* every evening. And I have lately been credibly informed that one of these labels pleasantly adorns the tomb of the Pharoahs.

"About this time died William Brough, one of the well-known brothers who did so much good work for the stage and periodical literature. No doubt you have read the genial recollections of them in Edmund Yates's 'Reminiscences.' To poor William Brough's funeral, in a cemetery a little way out of London, Toole and I repaired one cold and drizzly afternoon—just the kind of day when the gloomy reminder that we are all mortal

becomes most oppressive. We saw our dead friend laid in the earth, and as we turned away, wondering whose scene with the grave-digger would come next, the prosaic suggestion was made that perhaps some degree of physical comfort might be got out of a little hot brandy-and-water. This idea was embraced with alacrity; and while we were thus consoling ourselves in a neighbouring inn, our attention was attracted by a crowd surrounding an object lying in the gutter. My friend's fertile brain was awake at once; so we quickly made our way to the spot, and found that some too-thirsty soul, tempted by a barrel of spirits which had burst in the street, had drunk not wisely but too well. The crowd stood gazing at the body in a helpless way, but my companion knew his cue at once. Pushing his way through the throng, followed by me, his admiring assistant, and suggesting that he was a doctor, he knelt beside the fallen reveler, whose shirt-collar he unbuttoned, felt his pulse, laid his hand on his heart, and performed with impressive accuracy the whole professional routine. The people watched the process with sympathy and confidence, and when my friend said, 'It's not very serious, I can soon put him right again,' there was a hum of approval and admiration. Feeling in one of his pockets, the 'doctor' took out something, which he applied to the patient's forehead. From another pocket he took something else, and applied it to one cheek, while a third pocket yielded a further medicament for the other cheek. Then looking round with a thoughtful and abstracted air, one hand covering the face of the patient, with the other he removed a cap from the head of a gaping and bewildered boy, and dextrously placed it on the beplastered visage of the prostrate Briton.

“ ‘ Now,’ said he triumphantly, ‘ leave him alone for five minutes, and “ Richard’s himself again.” ’ ”

“ We then withdrew, and with some celerity jumped into a cab, followed with a suppressed cheer. But we had not proceeded far when a yell of execration broke upon our ears ; for the impatient crowd had found that the object of their commiseration was no less a person than ‘ *Uncle Dick’s Darling*, Gaiety Theatre, every evening.’ ”

VIII.

AT Whitby we encountered a cab-driver, who in an unconscious stupid kind of way proved to be more than a match for us. To begin with he was a dolt of the most unpromising character. He drove us to wrong places and made silly mistakes in regard to our instructions: At the close he developed a cunning mendacity.

In the midst of one of his gravest errors I said to him, “ You don’t seem to know anything at all about Whitby. Where are you going to drive to now ? ”

“ Well,” he said, “ I was agoing round to the pier.”

“ I said the post-office.”

“ Very well, sir,” he said.

Whereupon Toole remarked, “ My friend says you don’t know anything at all about Whitby.”

“ Oh, yes, I do, sir ; I know all about Whitby.”

“ Very well, then, perhaps you can tell me whether Mr. Joheronfg is still living in Whitby ? ”

“ Yes, sir ; he is.”

“ What, up there on the cliffs ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I thought,” continued Toole “ he had left the town when his little boy hurt his finger in that accident. But I am glad to hear he is still here.”

“ Oh, yes ; he still lives here.”

"Do you remember the accident?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Was it a black pony?"

"It was, sir."

"Didn't hurt him very much?"

"No, sir."

"Only his finger?"

"No, sir."

"Do the Jorkinses still live at the old house?"

"I believe they does, sir."

"Mrs. Jorkins and the family?"

"Yes, sir."

"Quite right," said Toole. "Very well. Drive on to the post-office. You evidently do know all about Whitby."

"Yes, sir. I've lived here all my life. I knows Whitby as well as most."

"Very well. Drive to the post-office."

IX.

THAT night after the play we supped at the hotel with George Loveday, whom Toole kept in a continuous chuckle over our adventures at York.

It is always the humorous or the pathetic aspect of an incident that takes Toole's fancy, rarely the simply dramatic. He does not see things from their acting point of view as Irving does: he is not continually placing events and characters on the stage as Irving is, decorating them with stage effects, mounting and lighting them and playing them in imagination. Occurrences that are funny or sad strike Toole as current incidents, move him pathetically or excite into activity his natural love of fun. He may unconsciously store away the results, and they may crop up in his work; but in the case of the actor who has done so much as Irving for the poetical drama, and who has so keen

a sense of what is strong and gloomy and awe-inspiring in stage stories, there is a continually watchful eye upon nature for poetic and dramatic suggestions, not alone as regards individual characterization, but in connection with dramatic catastrophe and theatrical effect. Then again, Toole is a born *raconteur*. He finds pleasure in



SUPPER AND STORIES AT WHITBY.

the narration of funny things that have struck him during the day, odd incidents of travel, curious details in regard to his business. His friend Irving is also an excellent story-teller, but the gift is not spontaneous with him as with Toole. His thoughts are more engaged in the shaping of future enterprises than with the affairs of the

moment. No one admires Toole's gift of fun and humorous narrative more than Irving.

I am tempted into these passing reflections by the remembrance of a previous visit to Whitby, and of the first night of my stay with Irving at this little Yorkshire sea-port. It was autumn then, as on the present occasion, somewhat stormy, too, and cold. But instead of sitting indoors and re-enacting the fun of the day, and recalling other humorous events, we strolled out into the night when Whitby was a-bed, and listened to the warning bell that boomed in the moaning waters off the coast ; a gloomy yet fascinating sound at night with the sea in darkness—only a strange void and blackness to tell us that it was writhing and tossing at our feet, and the bell moaning of rocks or shoals or other hidden dangers, upon which in the olden days many a stalwart mariner had come to grief, with its funereal music in his ears. We talked of what might have happened, what does happen, every day in stormy seas ; of the ballad of the Inchcape rock ; of the marvellous tale of the shipwreck of the *Hooker*, as told by Victor Hugo ; the snow-storm, the philosopher, and “ the bell of the abyss.”

Irving was at this time in the midst of negotiations for his first visit to America, wondering what the great Atlantic sea was like, how the Americans would accept his art, how he would like his Transatlantic audiences. It is wonderful what a tremendous event our first trip to America seems to all of us ; how small a matter our second voyage. Now that Toole and I were here on the Yorkshire coast together for the first time, letting the sea-bell toll at its own sweet will without comment or attention, Irving was away in the United States on his second professional tour ; and by the time these words are printed he will

have visited the country a third and fourth time for pleasure and for business.

X.

"Too much travelling for me," remarks Toole, "in the United States. A great country, no doubt, grand mountains and rivers, cities nearly all alike, and I don't see the advantage of size and magnificent distances which they are rather fond of talking about. It seems to me we have a pull in that matter, as I did not hesitate to tell them. Surely, as a matter of business convenience, to say nothing of keeping up personal friendships, it is a mistake to have the leading cities of a nation so far apart as they are in America. I can run to Manchester from London in four hours; it takes about thirty-six to get to Chicago from New York; it is only a comfortable day's trip, with a timely stoppage for dinner *en route*, between the Metropolis and Glasgow; it takes more than a week to get from New York to San Francisco. I think our arrangement is best; a tight little island, the theatres all over the land, within easy distance from each other and from London. I liked a lot of what I saw in America, and I have some dear kind friends there, but the travelling, the long distances, the heated railway-cars! Well, give me old England!"

"And tip it with green," remarked Loveday, beginning to laugh afresh over the comedy of the railway-station.

Toole's manner is irresistible. If anybody had known him long enough to grow tired of his fun it was Loveday; he was not demonstrative in his mirth, his laugh was occasionally hearty, but as a rule it consisted of a chuckle and a sympathetic glance at his fellow-listeners. "And to me," said Loveday, *entre nous*, "he is always fresh and

humorous, and his energy is, after all these years, a constant surprise. What astonishes me," continued Loveday, "is that when Johnny said, 'Tip it with green,' the station-master did not discover the joke."

"And it was that which most surprised me," I said; "but Toole was so intensely earnest, seemed so anxious to save the Company's money and the painter's time that any one might have been deceived. I only hope the station-master will enjoy the joke as much as we do. It had occurred to me that when the official in his fine uniform came up to the carriage, Toole would make some pleasant remark and let the matter drop. The boldness of attempting to trifle with so distinguished a person deserved success; failure must have been ignominious."

"It will amuse Irving," said Toole; "I don't know any one who enjoys a joke so much or so long. By the way, you want me to tell you some things about Irving;" then, turning to Loveday, he said, "Hatton is really writing those remarkable reminiscences after all."

Loveday smiled incredulously.

"I am making notes all the time—have come to stay a week with you for that especial purpose," I said.

"Yes," said Loveday, smiling, "I have heard of other fellows coming down to visit us for a day or two, in order to do a little quiet literary work. We shall see."

Later, however, the genial cynic confessed he thought I had done "some good work on the book," and that the York adventures were "first rate." I wonder if he was right, poor fellow, in this pleasant expression of opinion. The reader knows; and in due course I shall probably be as wise as the reader.

XIII.

COMBINING BUSINESS WITH
PLEASURE.

At Robin Hood's Bay—On certain military pickles—Stories of Compton—With Macready—A grim joke—"Business is business"—The pathetic parting of King and Brooke—"Macreadiana"—Miss Kelly at Feltham—"Chestnuts" and story-tellers—An incident of Sackville Street—The "Dodger's" wardrobe and the dealer in cast-off garments—A Belfast incident—Toole and the tailor—Mr. Percy Fitzgerald's "Irvingiana."

I.

WE spent three quiet, pleasant days at Whitby. The theatre stands upon a terrace by the sea. In the daytime we took long drives over the Yorkshire moors. At night my host would slip a coat over his theatrical costume and join me in a lounge between the acts. *The Serious Family* more particularly enabled him to do this. I smoked; he talked; it was lovely weather. The theatre emptied itself for ten minutes between the pieces. The audience—smoking, flirting, chatting—little thought my companion was "Mr. Spriggins" or "Mr. Sleek," as the case might be. Toole treated the engagement as a real holiday. He was overjoyed at getting back to the footlights. Not quite himself physically, he was nevertheless cheerful as ever, and he improved in health every day. "I think I should die," he said, "if I were cut off from work." Yes, he called it work. There are unsophisticated people who think acting is play, and I fear these Reminiscences may tend to confirm them in that opinion.

One day we drove to Robin Hood's Bay. At the local tavern there, with its tea-garden arrangement, near the sea, we proposed to lunch.

"What can we have to eat?" Toole asked.

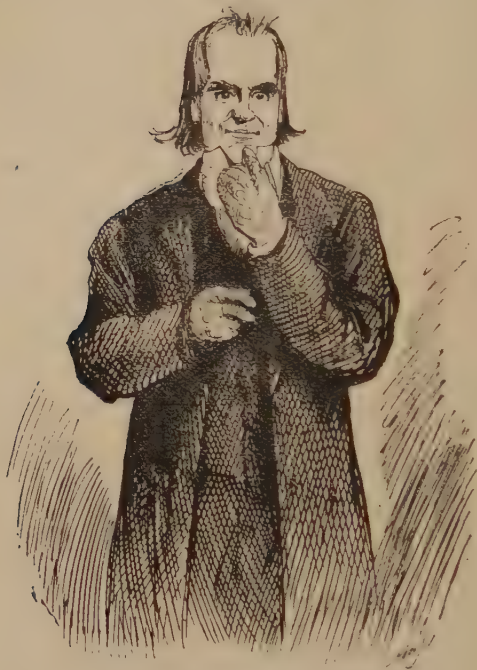
We have a joint of cold lamb, sir," said the waiter.

"Anything else?"

"Cold ham, sir, and there are eggs."

"Any salad?"

"No, sir; pickles, very good pickles."



MR. TOOLE AS "MR. SLEEK" IN "THE SERIOUS FAMILY."

"Whose pickles?"

"Captain White's pickles?"

"Very well," said Toole; "cold lamb and Captain White's pickles."

"Funny the pickles should be Captain White's," said Toole, "because I was leading up to pickles, the Captain's in particular. I wanted to tell you

about White's pickles, whether the Robin Hood pickles were dignified with his brand, or were only Crosse and Blackwell's, or Batty's, or anybody else's. Not long ago I was stranded at an out-of-the-way inn, waiting for Loveday, and, after a cold bit of supper, I found myself dramatizing, as you call it, a bottle of Captain White's pickles. I began wondering when he had thought of this concoction to which he had given his name. Had he been inspired with the recipe on the field of battle? Why 'Captain White's pickles'? Had the method of mixing dawned upon him while riding to the front, sword in hand, at the head of his troops; or, the advance being ordered, had he exclaimed, 'Oh, Pickles!' before seeking convenient shelter from the foe? I saw Captain White in all kinds of heroic positions, but I turned them all into ridicule. Then I wondered if the soldiers of his company helped him to put the pickles into the bottles and stick the labels on. I tried to imagine his lieutenants and subalterns, in full-dress uniform, occupied in the work of preparing the pickles, bottling them, labelling them, packing them up and sending them off in great parcels by train. If I had been a comic writer, I believe I should have done something for *Punch* about Captain White's pickles. In that case I suppose Burnand would have taken his revenge by playing 'Spriggins' or 'Chawles'; and I am not so sure that he would not have had the best of it.

Then, with a sudden transition from gaiety to gravity, he exclaimed, "Oh, here's an incident for the Reminiscences! I don't know why I think of it at the moment, because it is not in the least relevant to Burnand, or to *Punch*, or to pickles."

"Perhaps that is the reason why," I suggested.

"And yet it has something to do with eating. You knew Compton—a capital comedian—a quaint

dry style. He had a very dry humour, and was a most agreeable fellow. I remember dining with him at Sir Henry Thompson's; Sothern was one of the company. After dinner Compton was unusually quiet.

“ ‘You seem to be of a reflective turn of mind this evening,’ said our excellent host.

“ ‘Yes,’ said Compton, pointing to a lovely study of feminine beauty upon the wall opposite, ‘you have given me something which encourages thought. I have been regretting my lost youth, Sir Henry, and trying to realize the severity of the temptation of St. Anthony.’

“ ‘But this is the story of Compton that occurred to me. He had rather a clerical air; might well have been mistaken for an unostentatious curate, as in fact he was mistaken. It was at a country town, where a clerical meeting was being held; one of those occasional gatherings when the clergy dine at the leading hotel of the place. Compton was passing through the town, and hoped to find an ordinary at the hotel.

“ ‘The bishop and the clergy of the diocese are just about sitting down to dinner,’ said the head-waiter, ‘and I believe they would be glad to have you join them. I know they have invited a travelling stranger to do so before now upon an occasion of this kind. I will ask permission, if you will allow me;’ and before Compton had time to say yes or no, he was informed that the bishop would be very glad if he would partake of the feast. Dinner was being served and Compton was hungry; he entered the dining-hall. The bishop bowed to him, and room was made for him not far from the presiding clergyman, who, looking towards Compton, said,—

“ ‘Will our stranger guest say grace?’

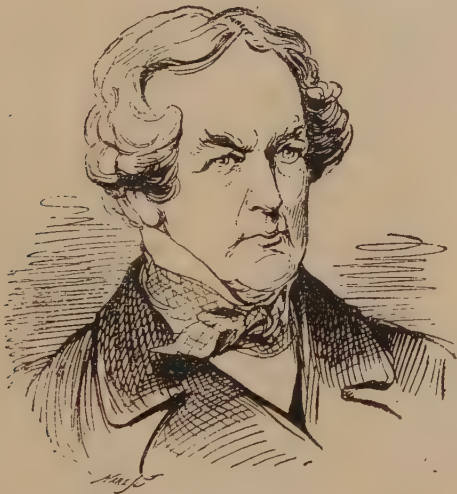
“ Compton was staggered for a moment, all the

grace he knew slipping at once straight out of his memory. Like myself, he was a church-goer ; and in the emergency a familiar passage from the Prayer Book occurred to him as not unsuitable to the occasion, and the clergy accepted the new form of grace as a bit of clerical eccentricity.

“ ‘ O Lord, open Thou our lips,’ said Compton, ‘ and our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.’ ”

II.

“ By the way, you were speaking about Macready as we drove along,” said Toole presently.



MR. MACREADY.

“ I called on him at Cheltenham. It had been said that he was not over-polite to some of the profession, and in a general way that he was exclusive and difficult of approach. I found him the opposite of all this ; a fine, distinguished old man, white hair, very courteous, and with a most pleasant smile, a trifle melancholy perhaps—a touch of Werner, but a gentle and human touch. We had

a long chat ; he spoke of his last appearance, and I said how I honoured him for making it his last when he said it was, the more so that I knew he had had many tremendous offers to induce him to reappear. And, of course, this was very honourable in Macready, seeing that he had managed Drury Lane often at a loss, in the interests of art, and only retired just in time to keep a remnant of his fortune to live upon in a quiet way. Considering that he was not rich, there was something very dignified in refusing offers of great and certain sums to appear again, especially in the face of examples of ladies and gentlemen, operatic and otherwise, taking not one farewell but half a dozen. He talked about his children, and referred to his not allowing them to go to the theatre, and said, by the advice of Charles Dickens and John Forster, he was glad that he had at last been induced to let his children see him act. As to his last appearance, he said he did not believe in an actor remaining on the stage after his powers were at an end ; he thought a man should retire in the zenith of his strength ; and he believed he had played 'Macbeth' on that last night as well as ever he had played it. I confirmed this ; and it pleased him very much when I told him that I had stood at the entrance of Drury Lane on his farewell appearance for five hours, with his great admirer and friend, Lowne, whose collection of Macreadiana, by the way, is the finest of the kind I have ever seen. I have played more than one joke off upon Lowne in that direction. Once we were at Shrewsbury together. He found there a remarkable old portrait which he wanted for his Macreadiana. The price was too much, he thought. He was going to call again about it the next day. In the meantime I called, bought it, arranged with the dealer to tell Lowne a won-

derful story about a collector from London, and a large sum voluntarily paid for the picture. The dealer must have done his part very well ; for at night, after the play, Lowne was rather down in the mouth. The subject of the Rugeley poisoning case was very rife at the time. Palmer had begun his awful work in the very hotel where we were staying. I encouraged Lowne and Loveday to talk about it. We parted finally for the night in a rather creepy condition. When Lowne put his light out I was outside his door. Suddenly I heard an alarmed exclamation, followed by a hasty striking of matches, a sigh of relief, and then the words, ' Ah, the dear fellow ! This is kind ! ' He had found in his bed an ugly parcel (I had had the picture impressively wrapped up) containing the rare portrait supposed to have been carried off by a London rival."

III.

LOWNE himself tells a story of Toole which business men will appreciate. When Toole was in America, Lowne acted as his treasurer on this side of the Atlantic.

" The last amount he had to receive in New York was eleven hundred pounds. He forwarded it to me in a bill payable at sight, drawn by Duncan Sherman and Co., on their London agents. I received it in the middle of a mail of my own," said Lowne, telling me the story when he had shown me his Macreadiana. " I was excessively busy at the time, and put it into a drawer, thinking I would pay it into the bank the next day. I went on with my work, but presently found myself remarking, ' Business is business : pay that cheque in this afternoon. ' I took a cab and paid it to Toole's credit.

" Two days afterwards I heard that the Ameri-

can firm had failed. I had not seen the announcement in the morning paper, but soon verified the—to me—alarming fact. I rushed off to the bank.

“ ‘Is the eleven hundred I paid in recently placed to Mr. Toole’s credit?’

“ They referred to their books.

“ ‘Yes,’ they said ; ‘it is.’

“ ‘Thank you very much,’ I said, greatly relieved, I need not tell you.

“ I telegraphed to Toole at Kingstown : ‘Don’t worry ; the eleven hundred draft is all right.’

“ ‘What is the matter with Lowne?’ was Toole’s remark to Loveday, showing the telegram. ‘What does he mean?’

“ The news of the failure had not reached them. They soon knew what I meant when they landed in Liverpool.

“ There’s another curious circumstance about that draft. When Toole paid the money at New York the clerk said, ‘Will you have the draft at thirty days or at sight?’

“ ‘Well, I don’t know,’ said Toole. ‘It will make no difference to me whether it is at thirty days or at sight.’

“ ‘Ah, well, perhaps you’d better have it at sight,’ said the clerk ; and Toole is under the impression to this day that the clerk knew what was going to happen, and was anxious to serve the English comedian. Actors, I need not say, often inspire very kindly feelings in the breasts of people with whom they are unacquainted. I know it was so particularly in the case of Macready.”

IV.

“ THE Macreadiana,” which has been mentioned as the finest collection of the kind my host had seen, is indeed unique so far as Macready is concerned, though it is probably outrivalled by Mr.

Irving's Edmund Kean collection (arranged by Mr. Lowne), and there are other kindred works, no doubt, on a still more elaborate scale. Mr. Lowne's "Macreadiana" was carefully consulted by Sir Frederick Pollock when he was editing his most complete "Life of Macready."

I spent a day quite recently with the collector, who took great delight in showing me the work, and directing my attention to its chief points of interest. He began to work on these memorial volumes in the year 1847, when as a youngster of nineteen he had imbibed a strong admiration for the great actor. The first contribution to it is in the shape of an autograph from Macready himself, who sent the following words, "*Toujours de la poésie, c'est ne pas vivre ! on n'existe qu'en prose*, William Charles Macready, June 17th, 1847." From that time his book has grown, till now, incorporated with Sir F. Pollock's memoir, it has reached five folio volumes of some 500 to 600 pages each. "It begins," writes Mr. Lowne, "with the account of the opening of the Birmingham Theatre by the elder Macready, in 1795, and many of the bills of that theatre and of old Covent Garden are here, with that gentleman's name as an actor of small parts. Macready (W. C.) starts with the *Birmingham Gazette* of 1810, containing the account of 'a young gentleman named Macready,' having made his *début* the previous evening as 'Romeo,' the notice at this early age (he was then but seventeen) foreshadowing his future greatness. This paper was sent to me by a gentleman of Birmingham, whom I never knew, but who wrote me with it a charming letter, by the kind offices of dear Henry Irving, my good friend for many years. Macready is traced through his early provincial career by many rare playbills, wherein we find him playing in all sorts of dramas—the

Wood Daemon, for instance, in which he represented 'Hardyknute'—'Charles II.' in *The Royal Oak*—'Belcour' in *West Indian*—'Puff' in *The Critic*. The father became bankrupt in 1809. Here are the MS. copy of his address to the Birmingham audience when giving up the theatre, and later the list of bankrupts in which he appears as William Macready, dealer, 12th November, 1809. All the bills of Macready's first nights in London are here with the notices of his performances, and the playbills extend throughout his London career down to the final night at Drury Lane in 1851. Especially noticeable are bills of his management, both at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, which are all but complete as far as first nights of important plays and revivals are concerned. In one of his country engagements, the manager announced Shakspeare's play of *The Stranger*! I wonder what Macready said when he saw this bill. All the great actors of this period, and many of those antecedent to it, are represented both by portraits and autograph letters. There are letters of Garrick, one a remarkably fine one to Dodsley, to whom Davy administers a sharp rebuke on his querulous and quarrelsome conduct regarding some now-forgotten drama of his. Another shows Garrick's care in the preparation of his correspondence, being a rough draft of a letter to Edmund Burke, declining to act a drama which had been submitted to him on account of his 'duty to the public.' There are letters of Siddons, the Kembles, both John and Charles, Macklin, Edmund Kean, King, the Jordan, Bannister, Munden, Elliston, and all the earlier stars who acted with Macready, and the modern drama is represented in a like manner. There is the autograph agreement which Phelps signed and exchanged with Macready when the

latter went down to Southampton to see and engage him, as described in Pollock's book, and also Phelps' previous letter to B. Webster, agreeing to an engagement at 10*l.* per week : there are letters of all his later contemporaries, both male and female—Helen Faucit, Charlotte Cushman, Fanny Kemble, Mrs. Nisbett, Mrs. Warner, &c., &c. Among the autographs I may mention one of Charles Kean, who writes to Moran of the *Globe* 'For God's sake, take care of us to-night. The *Morning Herald*, formerly kind to me, has changed its colour—milk turned to gall, entered one of the Macready masonic clique, &c., &c.' The authors are represented by letters of Browning (referring to the publication of his 'Strafford'), Knowles, Talfourd, Bulwer, Dickens (one of the most prized of these is the letter written by the great novelist to Macready, the day after he left the stage, and which was very kindly given to me by my friend Jonathan Macready), Thackeray, Jerrold, Forster, and others. There is a delightful letter of Jenny Lind to Macready, shortly after his return from America, and referring to the famous Astor House riots in 1849. The portraits are very numerous, and all his contemporaries are illustrated; there is in addition the entire series of Lane's admirable portraits of the actors and actresses of Macready's period, and George Scharf's etchings illustrative of his management at Covent Garden. Newspaper cuttings run through the whole book, including those which show Macready after his retirement from the stage, subsiding into the quiet teacher of village boys in a school of his own promotion, with occasional appearances as a Public Lecturer or Reader, for the benefit of such Institutions as the Bristol Athenæum and such like. The volumes close with the published records of his death and funeral, and later with

the reviews of Pollock's book, accounts of the correspondence, including Macready's own letters, upwards of a hundred, of which not the least interesting to me as the collector are those written to myself before, and subsequent to, his retirement from the stage. The latter show the 'trembling hand,' and some of the very latest are simply signed by him, the substance being written by the kind and gentle lady who happily still lives and bears his honoured name. Fifty years subsequent to his first London appearance, viz. on September 16th, 1866, he wrote me a beautiful letter in reply to one of mine congratulating him on the anniversary, to which he touchingly refers. It is attached to the playbill of his first night. There are here, also, the playbill of the night of the Astor Place riot, sent to me from America by a dear friend, and the pamphlets relating to the Forest riot sent me from Philadelphia by the late Mr. Gemmill, the manager there, and all the papers relating to the Bunn v. Macready row in 1836, with the trial, and a curious print of the fight."

V.

"MEMORANDA:—To ask J. L. T. about G. V. Brooke and Miss Kelly," I read from my notebook, upon which hint my host recalled the incidents I desired to chronicle.

"The last time I saw G. V. Brooke," he said, "is one of my pathetic memories. It was on the eve of his departure for Australia in the ill-fated *London*. He and I went to visit T. C. King in Queen's Square, Dublin.

"Everybody thought King was dying, and he certainly looked as if he had not long to live. We went into his bedroom, and I was very much impressed with the sorrowful manner in which they

greeted each other, their deep rich voices adding to the solemnity of the occasion. Poor Brooke was very much moved at the close.

“ ‘Well, my dear Tom,’ he said, ‘please God, you’ll soon get better.’ ”

“ ‘God bless you, Gus,’ was King’s reply, ‘you are very kind; but we shall never meet again.’ ”

“ Brooke leaned over the bed and kissed King



MR. G. V. BROOKE.

very tenderly on the forehead, and said ‘Good-bye!’ ”

“We had a cab at the door. When we got into it Brooke said, ‘Poor Tom! I fear he is right; we shall never see the dear fellow again.’ ”

“Brooke sailed a few days afterwards for Australia, and was drowned at sea. King is still living.”

“I played with Brooke only on one occasion.”

It was in Liverpool, for his benefit. *The Pretty Horsebreaker* was put up for me, and *The Wife* for Brooke. He was an excellent actor, impressive, strong, romantic, and a kindly fellow. Nothing could have been more manly, not to say heroic, than his death.

"Miss Kelly.—I went to see her with Irving (she was ninety), at Feltham. An old-fashioned cottage harpsichord and other accessories. You might have thought you were in an atmosphere of



MISS KELLY.

a hundred years ago. She was the original, you know, in *The Maid and the Magpie*; famous as the robber's wife. Acted with Edmund Kean and Macready. Spoke in high terms of Grimaldi. She gave me the buckles which Bannister used as 'Master Walter' in *Babes in the Wood*.

"We went twice to see her. She was one of the Babes. She greatly admired Irving. Would have him stand in the light where she could see him.

"She was a very interesting old lady. She built the Royalty, you know, which was called Kelly's Theatre—the first time in London an actor or an actress had given his or her name to a theatre. She lost a great deal of money one way and another in the management—seventeen thousand pounds. She was famous as a teacher. Miss Keeley was one of her pupils. She brought out pupils.

"Mr. Gladstone was going to put her on the Literary Fund in recognition of the benefits she had conferred upon the dramatic art, &c. Irving and myself used our influence in this direction, but she would not accept it. She was very anxious we should try and get the recognition; that was all she wanted. She was rather proud of what she had done, and said all she desired was the smallest public acknowledgment that she had been of some service.

"When we left—it was not very long before she died, poor thing—I remember she stood upon the stairs saying good-bye to us; and taking Irving's hand and looking at me, she said—not in a maudlin or morbid way—that life was uncertain. 'If I go first'—looking reverently upwards—'I shall keep places for you two.'"

VI.

A BRIGHT, breezy drive back to Whitby, an hour's rest, then two hours of acting, a frugal supper (the convalescent's *régime*, with gout on the watch for its victim's thoughtless moments), and I had other unsatisfied memoranda in my note-book that were the cues to further Reminiscences.

"If there is any pet story," I said, "which you desire to keep for your own particular telling, now is your time to reserve it. When these papers are printed and published, the best of your

anecdotes will become chestnuts, to quote the Americanism referred to in our opening chapter."

"And serve them right," he said, "at least I shall not be misrepresented. Our Anglo-American scribe has been at his annexations very much of late. And won't he go it when the book is announced. I would not mind so much if he did not try and disguise his hand by mutilating the incidents in which I am concerned."

"Don't mind him," I said, "he will blush and amend his ways when he reads these chronicles; and if he does not, we shall have a circulation of millions to his hundreds."

I remember saying to General Horace Porter in New York, when I asked him to let me tell his story about ducks in "Irving's Impressions," that if he consented he would for ever afterwards lose it as an oratorical adornment of his excellent speeches. Further, I explained that he would be plundered of his witty anecdote by hundreds of other story-tellers, who would quote neither him nor me. At a royal reception a year or two later, the Grosvenor Gallery echoed to the laughter of the Prince of Wales and a number of literary guests "over one of the best stories they ever heard." It was the duck story recited by a popular American, who in his sparkling narrative, forgot both Horace and Joseph. All writers and all story-tellers have this kind of experience. Being a modest man, and liking to see other people happy, I have often listened with feigned amusement to several anecdotes which, if not my own invention, had at least made their first appearances in print with my assistance. A curious experience of Mark Twain's in this direction I have narrated somewhere. It was during an evening at Bateman's, when the genial colonel lived at Kensington Gore. Mark Twain had told several

good stories. Irving had also contributed to the "anecdotiana" of the evening. One of his stories was so good, that I suggested to Clemens (Mark Twain) he should make a note of it as an example of English humour. He did so with a grave smile. The next day I repeated the story to another American friend, who sent me one of Twain's latest books containing the anecdote in question. Mark Twain, I believe, credited me with being a wag, and he must have enjoyed the subtle humour of Irving. But Mark is a professional humorist. He would invent the kind of fun in which I had unconsciously indulged. But this is by the way. Mr. Toole has some further reminiscences of the "Dodger."

VII.

"I HAVE had several jokes with the 'Dodger's' clothes," says my pleasant host. "Years ago, in Dublin, it was a common thing for purchasers of old clothes to haunt the neighbourhood of the Post Office in Sackville Street. When you were posting your letters you would be addressed as 'Captain' or 'Colonel,' as the case might be, by one of these merchants, who would tell you his business, and press you urgently as an army man to let him relieve you of your cast-off garments. There was one old gentleman in particular who accosted me on several occasions. At last I invited him to come to me at Brunswick Street, and I would show him what I had in his way.

" 'I feel quite sure it won't be worth your while,' I said, 'but since you are so pressing I will have the articles got out for you.'

" 'It's my business, Colonel. I shall have the greatest pleasure in calling, and I'll give ye the best price, as I always do.'

"I had the Dodger coat put up in one little

parcel, the waistcoat in another, and the trousers in another. I numbered them 1, 2, and 3, and arranged with the servant that she was to bring them down as I called for them.

"My friend from the neighbourhood of the Post Office arrived in due course. I received him with a continuation of my previous fears that I had nothing which was worth his while; but, I said, at the same time I would show him two or three little things that might be regarded as cast-off.

" 'Sorr, it's myself that should apologize if any is needed. I'm very glad, sorr, to call upon you, and give you my best attention.'

"I called to the servant. She brought No. 1. It was rather carefully tied up. The dealer talked and chatted while he undid the knots.

"I said it was a pleasant day. He said indeed it was. I said Dublin was a fine city. He said I might say that. I complimented Phoenix Park. He agreed with me that it was a lovely park; and as he did so he unfolded the Dodger's coat. I pretended not to notice that the parcel was undone.

"You know what a coat it is. The tails reach down to the ground. The original coat had to be lengthened. It is a most extraordinary-looking garment, very dilapidated and worthless in appearance.

"I saw him lift it up to the light, look at it, turn it over, and presently exclaim, 'By St. Patrick! and what the divil's this? What do you do with a thing like that, sorr?'

" 'Well, I wear it occasionally.'

" 'Oh, sorr, it must 'a bin a long time ago before ye wore a thing like that. Well! . . . Well!! . . . Well!!!'

" 'Ah,' I said, 'I was afraid it was no good

your coming. Better not trouble; better not show you the other.'

" 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'since I'm here better see it, sorr—if it's something more marketable.'

"Whereupon he opened No. 2, the Dodger's trousers.

" 'Great Heaven's!' he said. 'Upon my soul, I never saw such a thing in all my life! . . . Have you nothing more in this way?'

"Yes, I said, there was another little parcel, a waistcoat; but I was afraid it would be no good. In fact, I regretted that he had taken the trouble to come.

" 'Oh, no trouble at all, sorr.' He no longer called me colonel; he would not even honour me with the title of captain. 'No trouble at all, sorr. Very glad to wait upon gentlemen in the way of my business.'

"The waistcoat was a settler. He held it up to the light; he laid it down upon the trousers.

" 'Well, upon my soul, sorr, what ought I to say to such things as these? They're not worth a copper for pieces. What in the world d'ye do with such apparel?'

" 'Oh, I wear it,' I said.

" 'You wear *them*? ' pointing to the clothes.

" 'Yes.'

" 'Where, may I take the liberty of asking?'

" 'Oh, sometimes at a masked ball,' I said.

" 'Oh, my darlint, that's it, is it? Well, now I can fit ye; I can fit ye with the smartest soldier's coat ye ivver saw.'

"He had an eye to business, you see; but he did not fit me with the coat, and of course for giving him all this trouble, which afforded me a good deal of amusement, I endowed him with an annuity, paid quarterly; and I conferred a similar token of my appreciation and sympathy upon a boy

who took part in a little comedy some years afterwards at Belfast."

"Mr. M'Gee was a swell tailor there, and is, I believe, to this day. He had a fine business, and conducted it in a fine manner. Sothern used to patronize him.

"One of his customers, an old friend of mine, introduced him to me: and we arranged that at about the time when we should be chatting with him—half-past two in the day—a boy from the hotel should wait upon him with a parcel containing the Dodger's coat and trousers. He was carefully instructed by the boots at the hotel to give that parcel into no other hands except those of Mr. M'Gee; to inform him that the Mayor had sent him, and wished Mr. M'Gee to put the clothes in order for him in time for the grand ball which was the event of the following night.

"I had been introduced to the famous tailor, and we were just beginning a pleasant conversation about the material of a beautiful vest that would be the very thing for me; 'a most elegant and lovely piece of velvet as ever came from a loom,' he assured me, 'the height of the fashion,' a thing he could entirely recommend. He was a fine, handsome, showy-looking gentleman, rather pompous, but very agreeable, and had a fine, rich, and varied vocabulary. He was interrupted by one of his assistants informing him that a messenger from the Mayor wished to see him.

"'Oh, indeed. You'll excuse me, gentlemen, a moment. I won't detain ye a moment. It's a messenger from the Mayor—most important, gentlemen—a highly-cultivated and altogether a very fine representative of civic power. Excuse me a moment, gentlemen.'

"We excused him; continued to examine the

vest-pieces, but followed him with our eyes, listened to him with our ears.

“The boy stood there with the parcel in his arms. Mr. M’Gee approached him.

“‘What is it, my boy?’

“‘It’s from the Mayor, sorr. I was to give it into no other hands but yours, sorr. It’s some clothes which the Mayor wishes you to put in order for him for the grand ball to-morrow.’

“‘Very well; give the parcel to me, my boy, and tell the Mayor I will attend to it. First, let’s see what it is.’

“His assistant took the string from the parcel, and Mr. M’Gee stepped back with an exclamation.

“‘What the devil’s this? What d’ye mean? Who sent ye with these things?’

“‘The Mayor, sorr.’

“‘Oh the Mayor sent ye, did he? Come here—come here, my boy.’

“The boy followed him a little distance into the shop, and then Mr. M’Gee gave him a whack that echoed through the place.

“‘Ye young blackguard! Take that to the Mayor, and take your dirty garments to the Mayor,’ and he threw them at the boy, who howled tremendously.

“This was a little more than we had bargained for. The pride of Mr. M’Gee was evidently awfully outraged, and the outrage had aroused an evidently violent temper. We got the boy quietly out of the place with a comfortable solatium, and rescued the clothes, which seemed to be in imminent danger of destruction.

“It took us a considerable time to explain the joke to Mr. M’Gee, who by-and-by professed to enter into it and to be considerably amused. I gave him an order for that elegant fashionable

vest, but I don't think he ever quite got over the liberty we had taken with him. Sothorn, who afterwards mentioned it to him, told me, indeed, that M'Gee would never forgive me. It was not simply that he objected to be made ridiculous, but it hurt his pride that a stranger to him and an artist belonging to a profession he admired should treat him with disrespect."

VIII.

THE description of Mr. Lowne's great collection of Macready illustrations suggests to Mr. Percy Fitzgerald that I would like to chronicle a collection which has been formed, "relating to our great living actor, Mr. Henry Irving." Mr. Fitzgerald tells me he began this pleasant task many years ago, "by first getting together all that I could conveniently find, and without extending my researches (as Mr. Lowne has done) to matters only indirectly connected with the central figure, such as illustrations of contemporary performers, &c."

Having secured all that belonged to the actor's past, it was not difficult to keep the collection "up to date." The result is nine huge folios, forming an extraordinary mass of pictures, reports, criticisms, and playbills, all "laid down," as it is called, and mounted, and all referring to one conspicuous personage of our time. Dr. Burney, the musician, amused himself by collecting in this fashion all that had been printed or engraved of his great friend, Garrick; and the number of portraits, in character and otherwise, thus brought together is very remarkable. "But, in this respect, it can hardly compare with what has been done in the case of Irving, whose refined features are better known to the public than any one of his time, and have been reproduced again and again.

In this respect, he may be said, in the racing phrase, to have 'beaten all preceding records.' It would be an interesting inquiry to discover what is the foundation of this *pictorial popularity*, as it may be called. It might be traced to the having a sympathetic nature, and this is no doubt the secret of the charm exercised by such persons as Mr. Gladstone, Cardinal Manning, and Irving. Irving has been portrayed in every form known to the limner, from the official, elaborately-finished portrait by Millais and Long, down to the little rudely-engraved woodcut in the corner of a penny paper."

In Mr. Fitzgerald's collection there are some thousands of these "counterfeit presentments"—fine photogravures, lithographs, wood engravings, caricatures without number, innumerable scenes from plays, many of these very effective and clever—"in short, the picturesque nature and movements of the man appear to be always prompting and inspiring the artist." In their arrangement Mr. Fitzgerald has taken care to collect pictures that illustrate each play—the various scenes, with the sketches of the chief actor—the bills and the criticisms from all the journals: from the hurried two columns, written off hastily at midnight after the performance, to the more thoughtful and scientific essay in a monthly review. "When the *Corsican Brothers* was brought out, an elegant and artistic *brochure* was issued, containing views of the scenes in delicate colouring, which it might be difficult to procure now. There are numbers, too, of large and spirited portraits—big heads with 'immaterial legs' as Elia hath it, and in gaudy colouring, but spirited withal, which one would not know where to seek for to-day. Even the advertising agents and dealers have utilized him, and Messrs. Allen, of Belfast, have issued certain

designs for wall-posters, which are admirable. Some enterprising Italian warehousemen have employed this firm to prepare a 'Mephistopheles,' which is strikingly excellent for the likeness, and well coloured too. There was a time when our actor was one of the best caricatured of men—a homage, it may be said, which, like that paid by vice to virtue, is the tribute offered by disappointment to success. Now he is so secure in the public favour, and so *rangé*, that we rarely see a caricature. The most successful of these *picadores* is Mr. Alfred Bryan, who knows every nerve and muscle of his Irving by heart, and must have done some thousand images of him in his day. These, it must be said, are bold and vigorous, though exaggerated, and one must admire the firm stroke and brilliant touches. Nor has the etcher been idle. There are two pretty idealizations of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and of *Faust*, which are worth securing, and two published long ago by Mrs. Nosedá of the Strand.

"During the run of *Hamlet* and *Eugene Aram*, there appeared some fine crayon drawings which were photographed and published, but which are now unprocurable. In proof of the quickening inspiration exercised by this great actor, it may be added that during the run of *Faust*, a clever young lady used to dash off spirited sketches of 'Mephisto' in red water-colours, and these were sold in the shops at five shillings a piece. The attitudes were varied according to the suggestion of the moment, and the likeness excellent. Nor must we forget the pleasing *Faust* souvenir, which originally appeared in the *Art Journal*, and of which a vast number of copies were sold. There have been also little statuettes modelled of him in this character. Indeed, the sculptor has been no less busy than the men of

brush and pencil. Mr. Onslow Ford's full-length "Hamlet" is well known, and is a fine specimen of the *bravura*; but it is rather heavy in treatment, and would have been more effective in bronze. There is a bust of him by Jackson, done many years ago for Mr. Bateman, rather formal and magisterial in expression. There are but few photographs 'in character'—for the 'Merchant of Venice' was, I believe, one of the last occasions on which Irving consented to sit, or stand. There are some good ones, however, of him as 'Dr. Primrose'; but none as 'Hamlet,' 'Richard,' 'Benedick,' 'Mephisto,' or 'Romeo.'

"Passing now to the literary portion of the collection, we shall find an astonishing aggregate of details. There are some half a dozen "lives"—and sundry controversial pamphlets, including 'The Fashionable Tragedian,' some of attack, some of defence, panegyrics, assaults, burlesques, &c. There are the two volumes of 'Impressions of America,' and criticisms from every journal, many from the provinces. Very curious is the record of the American tours with the American criticisms. These were furnished to me regularly by the unfailing thoughtfulness of the manager of the company, and are fairly complete. The Irving visit produced a flood of literature, and the leading criticisms were collected and published, while Mr. William Winter, the most distinguished of the Transatlantic critics, has issued his own in a pretty volume. The American bills are interesting, and illustrative of the country, were it only for the pennyworth of dramatic bread that accompanies the intolerable quantity of advertisement. 'Irving bills,' as the dealers have it, are almost impossible to procure, and some of those early ones, in which his name figures modestly as a lord or courtier, bring high prices.

I have a few relating to the old Surrey and St. James's days. A set of the Lyceum bills would be but a *lean* one, and scarcely reach beyond two score; for as each play has 'run' about a year and more, each night's bill is, of course, a repetition of the preceding one. Then there are great numbers of letters, invitation cards, bills of fare, for the path of our actor is marked by profuse hospitalities.

"Such, then, is this curious and, as I may call it, flattering memorial. I need hardly add that our friend himself takes a great interest in its progress, and supplies occasionally something of interest. One is inclined to speculate, what will be the final limit of the undertaking? To what extent will it expand? I must confess, that at this moment it has gone beyond measurable or even manageable dimensions. I can contemplate it as the years roll on, like Mr. Weller's Shepherd, 'a swellin' wisely,' encroaching on the next shelf, one huge armful added to another, as the *Times* develops in a club library. Inconvenient as this prospect may be, I shall welcome it cheerfully, as it will be a sure sign of the lengthy life and happy prosperity of the amiable and brilliant person whose career is thus recorded."

XIV.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES, ANECDOTES, AND SPEECHES.

Keeping up appearances—A local hit—"Still I am not happy"—Creswick and the song—Paying her rent—Halifax and Huddersfield—The Kirbys—Shepherd and the bandit—Sheridan Knowles—The Trebizonde magician

in trouble—Lord Dudley and the performing dogs—Morality and the stage—Toole and his serious friend—An Edinburgh speech—Cant and slander rebuked—Other notable speeches.

I.

DURING a few pleasant days at Harrogate we cleared up a budget of miscellaneous notes. The little theatre was crowded every night. An interesting feature of the audience was a number of Catholic priests from an adjacent religious establishment. The reverend gentlemen enjoyed the plays immensely. They were particularly delighted with *The Serious Family*. Toole had many callers at the hotel. We drove to Knaresborough one day, and devoted the rest of our time to the Reminiscences, with the following results. It was originally my intention to write something about Harrogate, but I find it best to keep in view the end and aim of my sojourn there. Do you remember the old story of the Scotchman who had the reputation of never turning aside from the work he had in hand? A London visitor to the village where Sandy was a servitor made a bet he would break the charm of Sandy's firmness of purpose. The Scotchman went to the well every morning for water. The Londoner scattered half-pennies along the road. Sandy looked down curiously at the first; paused on seeing the second; at the third put down his pitcher. The Londoner and a native were in hiding, but looking on. The native trembled for his bet; the Londoner chuckled; but just as Sandy was about to pick up the Londoner's pence he raised his pitcher and walked on his way, remarking, "Nay, when I coom oot to get bawbees, I'll get bawbees; when I coom oot to get watter, I'll get watter." That is how the chronicler of these Reminiscences feels. When he goes out to describe Harrogate, he'll

describe Harrogate ; when he goes out to chronicle Toole's Reminiscences, he will not turn aside for all the tempting bits of local character and colour Harrogate can provide.

II.

" ON one of my first seasons at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, I played *Uncle Dick's Darling*. It was capitally put upon the stage, and everything went well until the last change after the dream. There's 'a scene rise and sink.' The top went up ; the other portion would not move. I was obliged to step over the portion that wouldn't sink. The boys in the gallery hissed.

" At the close, when they called me, I went forward and said that a little mishap had occurred, 'but you ought not to blame us. We were only two or three minutes trying to sink that bit of scenery, and you have been two or three weeks trying to raise a ship in Kingstown Harbour.'

" The hit took wonderfully. It went with roars of laughter and applause. A ship had sunk in Kingstown Harbour, and there had been a good deal of hostile criticism in the press in regard to the futile efforts which had been made to raise it.

" After *Aladdin the Second* in Dublin, in which my catch phrase, 'Still I am not happy,' was very popular with the boys, I went for a little trip to Killarney ; and on my return spent an evening at the Italian Opera. I was 'observed,' as the tragedians say. A boy in the gallery called out, 'There's Toole in a private box, and still he is not happy!' Then other boys called upon me for a song. I dissembled ; but finally had to retire."

III.

" THE ballad in *Uncle Dick's Darling* was written by our old friend Wrighton—his friends used to call

him Billy Wrighton—who was not only a delightful composer of simple ballads, but used to sing them in a very charming, sympathetic, old-fashioned way. I made him a present of a silver jug as a souvenir of the ballad, the words of which were written by Clement Scott. The publishers, in order, as they said, to make the song popular and sell it, insisted upon putting my name upon the frontispiece as if I were the author. I expostulated, pointing out to them that even if I could write a song, a sentimental one would not be exactly in my line. However, they were business-men, and they arranged the matter in such a way that on the title-page it did appear as though I was more or less the author of the ballad, and at a party at Wrexham, where I sung it one evening, the company took such an interest in the alleged composer that I could stand it no longer, and declared publicly that I was not the composer of that pretty ballad, and could not, under any circumstances, go through life as an impostor. The publishers were very indignant at this, but I couldn't help it. Besides, as I told them, if I permitted this kind of thing to go on, they might be asking me to write an opera, or setting me forth to the world as a rival of Verdi or Balfe."

IV.

"WHEN I was playing *Uncle Dick's Darling* at Birmingham some years ago," begins my genial host, in response to sundry questions of the chronicler, "in the rush for gallery seats a man broke his leg, and his chief distress was not that he had broken his leg, but that the accident had happened in the gallery.

" 'I have never,' he said, 'been in the gallery before. The pit was so crowded, I couldn't get a

seat. I am a commercial traveller, and I shouldn't like my firm to know that I was in the gallery. It would lower me in their estimation.'

"I need not say that Mr. Rodgers, to whom this confession was made, never alluded to the particular part of the house in which the poor gentleman came to grief. I believe, out of pure sympathy for him, Rodgers was willing to have hinted, if necessary, that the painful event had occurred in the dress circle. What a thing keeping up appearances is! I suppose the poor chap was right. He knew his firm."

V.

"ONE day, during an engagement which I was fulfilling at Bolton, Loveday and myself were sitting in our room at the Swan Hotel, he making up his accounts, I writing letters, when a woman walked in, banged down some money upon the table and said, 'There's the rent!'

"George looked at me : I looked at George.

"'Oh,' I said, 'that's the rent, is it?'

"'Yes,' she said; 'and we must have some repairs done.'

"I said, 'Certainly. What do you want doing?'

"She said she wanted the rooms papered and whitewashed.

"'Certainly,' I said, 'they shall be papered and whitewashed. Anything else?'

"'The windows don't fit properly.'

"'They shall be made to fit,' I said.

"'Thank you.'

"'Anything else?'

"No; she didn't think there was.

"'Well, if you think of anything else you have only to mention it and you shall have it done.'

"'Will you give me a receipt?'

"I turned to George and said, 'Give the lady a receipt.'

"George smiled; looked bewildered; gave her an order for a box, putting it in an envelope; bowed; gave it to her, and she left the room.

"Of course we followed to listen. There were others at the bottom of the staircase, and we saw the situation at once. Opposite to us was a room, out of which a man came. We looked in and saw there was a sort of rent audit going on—the collection of rents for some local estate.

"We heard our visitor explaining how kind we had been, and we half regretted we had not told her she should pay no rent at all in future. But presently there was an altercation between her and an official, who said they had agreed to do nothing of the kind, neither in the way of whitewashing nor papering: whereupon she grew considerably excited; and more particularly when the official, having been up to the audit-room, came back and said she had not paid her rent at all.

"In the meantime, of course, we had put matters right, and after our unexpected fun, George rewarded the old lady, and we interposed with the agent on her behalf and secured her the envied whitewashing and papering we had promised."

VI.

"THERE is supposed to be a good deal of jealousy between Halifax and Huddersfield, just as here is between St. Louis and Chicago, and other rival towns in America. Knowing this, when I went into a shop at Halifax to purchase a very showy handkerchief to use in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, I said, in a casual way, that I thought of going to a funeral in Halifax, and was told this was the kind of handkerchief they used. The shopwoman said, 'Indeed, sir, then it's new to

me ; nobody in Halifax would think of wearing such a flaring affair for a funeral, or anything in a serious way.'

" 'Well, I don't know,' I said ; 'they told me in Huddersfield you do queer things in Halifax. And that's where I got my information.'

" 'Oh, Huddersfield,' she said, 'they tell awful lies at Huddersfield. I assure you it is nothing of the kind. Huddersfield—it's like Huddersfield, that is ! A fine town, Huddersfield. Dear me ! dear me ! what lies they will tell at Huddersfield !'

"She was very angry ; and I thanked her for putting me right."

VII.

"SOME years ago I was arrested for income-tax. It was at Edinburgh. I went down to give some readings and recitals. The amount was six pounds. I had already paid it in London. Of course, I hadn't my receipt with me. The man said he was very sorry to arrest me, and I encouraged the tragedy for a little while, pretending I would allow him to carry me off, and all that sort of thing ; but finally I paid the money under protest, with an additional fee of ten shillings, which I have never received back from her Majesty's Commissioners, though I made more than one application for it. Fancy running the risk of being taken to gaol by the Government when you've paid the money ! It shows how little they know sometimes about these things in official quarters. They used to follow actors about in this way all over the country, and many an artist has had to pay twice over, as I had. But they arrange these things better now-a-days—don't know how, but they do."

VIII.

"WHEN Creswick, the tragedian, came to Edin-

burgh during one of my stock engagements there, *Black-eyed Susan* was put up. As a rule Wyndham played 'William,' but it had become traditional that the tragedian should add this character to his rôle. Creswick therefore claimed 'William' and played it.

"I was very popular, and explained to Creswick that after 'William's' yarn about San Domingo Billy, I was accustomed to sing a song. Wyndham, when he played the leading part, had not objected to the song, and on this occasion he was especially reconciled to the innovation.

"Creswick, with the solemn geniality of the tragic actor, agreed to the new business, 'Very well, then, Mr. Toole, after the passage relating to San Domingo Billy, I will call upon you to sing a song.'

"Poor Creswick! He did so. The boys encored it. I sung another; they encored that, Creswick, as the hero, 'William,' having to stand all the time. I felt a little wicked over it, and offered him a seat, which he took.

"I think I had five encores; and I believe that is the only time I can charge myself with not having shown full and complete respect to the serious hero of any piece in which I have been engaged. Creswick accepted my apologies, and I don't think the incident changed our friendship."

IX.

"DURING one of my starring engagements in Dublin, Miss Louise Keeley was a member of my company, and travelled with myself and wife. Her father and mother, the late Robert Keeley and the present Mrs. Keeley, came over on a visit. They had a box one night at the theatre, and I played two of Keeley's celebrated pieces. The first was called *The Governor's Wife*, in which

Mrs. Keeley used to be very successful as a funny little cockney woman. Keeley was 'The Governor.' On this occasion I played Keeley's part; Louise played her mother's. We were both rather shy and nervous with two such really clever predecessors looking on. *Ben Bolt* was the other piece; one of those wild, mad, melodramatic plays by T. B. Johnstone, in which I was a low comedy sailor who did wonders against the villain of the piece. One of my great scenes introduced some business with a red-hot poker. It was all very curious and unnatural, but was accepted in a serio-comic spirit by the audience.

"Keeley was very complimentary about the evening's performances, and after supper took quite an artistic interest in giving me suggestions, telling me what he did with the poker, taking one out of the fender and giving me a lesson, as if the matter was really serious. He was a very earnest little chap, had a naturally odd and comic look, bald-headed, very small, a grave humorous face, and a serious way of delivering very comic lines.

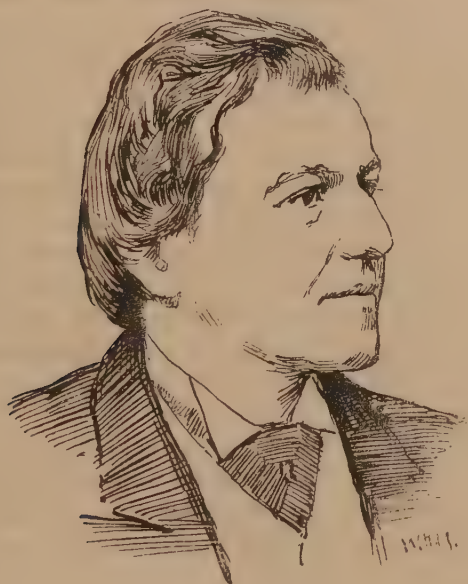
" 'They gave you a tidy poker,' he said. 'I'll tell you what I should do to-morrow night. I used to do it. Have the poker very red, and when you confront them, blow upon it and say: "I'm keeping it warm for you."'

"He took the poker from the fender and showed me this odd bit of business, as I said before, with the greatest earnestness.

"For one of our Dramatic Fund's benefits, I acted with the Kendals in *Married Life*. The Prince of Wales was in a box. I played 'Coddle'; Buckstone played 'Dove.' Somebody sent round a suggestion from the Prince that I should give an imitation of Buckstone if 'Buckie' didn't object. "Buckstone did *not* object. 'Not at all,' said

he, when I mentioned it. 'I shall be glad to hear you do it.' "In the next scene, where we met, I ventured to oblige my friends. The imitation went immensely. Buckstone, laughing as heartily as the rest, said, 'He didn't know what I was doing, but I affected a peculiar tone of voice which seemed very odd to him.'"

"Shepherd was a character at the Surrey. Shepherd and Creswick had the theatre together



MR. FERNANDEZ.

you know ; and they each had their seasons, too. Creswick, when he was in authority, always played Shakspeare and the high-class legitimate, and Shepherd played melodrama and strong domestic pieces. Fernandez, who since those days has made a distinguished mark in the profession, was cast for a very small part by Shepherd, and complained of it, resisted playing it. Shepherd said,

‘Why it’s a far better part than many in Creswick’s *répertoire*—more gig and go in it. I don’t see how you can complain; you’ve got the limelight on you during the whole of the last act!’

“One day, when I was talking to Shepherd, the super-master came to see him, and after some preliminary business said he wanted some advancement; he had been playing in the company nine or ten months, had done his best, and would like to get a speaking part with a little increase of salary.

“‘Who are you?’ said Shepherd. ‘Let me see. What do you do in the piece we are playing?’

“‘Well,’ said the super-master, ‘I’m on in that scene with the brigands. There are five of us sitting round the table. You are playing cards with us. I win fifty louis-d’or of you every night.’

“‘Very well,’ said Shepherd; ‘all right. I’ll advance you certainly. From to-night you shall win one hundred louis-d’or.’”

X.

“I DID not know Sheridan Knowles. He was before my time; but when he became what is considered serious, and used to preach, I heard him hold forth at Islington, and did not think much of it; but he was a very able man, no doubt, a fine dramatist, and a singularly droll fellow. Planché told me a capital story of him. I believe it is in his book of reminiscences; but that does not matter, does it? No. Well, this was the story. There was an actor at Drury Lane named Binge, who played kings and princes, both in the regular as well as the lyric drama. On the occasion in question he was a young count, who loved a gipsy girl, but deserted her for a great lady, and in the second act there was a sort of gala-day celebration

of the betrothal of the count to the fine lady ; but there was something in the story which rather went to suggest that, after all, the gipsy was not altogether out of the running. Well, Knowles had been in front until nearly the end of the act, but had to go away, and he was anxious, or professed to be so, to know how the piece ended ; so he went behind, and getting as near to Binge as he could



“ A 'NORRIBLE TALE ! ”

at the wings, without, of course, being seen by the audience, he called to him in a loud whisper, ‘ Binge ! ’ The actor looked over his shoulder, and in an aside asked, ‘ What is it ? ’ ‘ Tell me,’ replied Knowles, ‘ do you marry the poor gipsy, after all ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ answered Binge, a good deal worried at the question, and making signs with his hand behind his back for Knowles to stand further away. ‘ God

bless you,' said Knowles, seizing the warning hand, 'you were always a good fellow!'

"I was playing the 'Gravedigger' at the Queen's in Dublin with T. C. King. At the moment where I sing 'A pick and axe,' &c., the gallery boys called out 'A 'Norrible Tale!' and would not let me go on, demanding 'A 'Norrible Tale.' The manager was Harry Webb. It was a freak of the gallery boys to try and get him out. He made a speech on this occasion while I was standing in the grave, informing the house that this was Shakspeare, not farce, and that neither Mr. Toole nor himself would desecrate the Bard by introducing comic songs; at the close of which the gallery shouted, 'Go to bed, Webb; go to bed!'"

XI.

"WHILE I was at the Gaiety, I engaged for a series of performances at the Standard. It had been arranged that I should have a vacation. But suddenly Hollingshead came to me and said I must play in *The Princess of Trebizonde*, a first-rate part having been written for me. You know Hollingshead's emphatic way. He went to the Douglasses and tried to get me off the Standard engagement, but they held on to me. Hollingshead was not to be baulked. He arranged to play *The Princess* late enough to allow me to fill both engagements; so I played *Uncle Dick's Darling* at the Standard, and the magician in *The Princess* afterwards at the Gaiety. I had to dress in my brougham, change my 'Uncle Dick' clothes, and dress as the 'Trebizonde Conjuror' as I drove from the Standard. The moment I arrived at the Gaiety the overture for the burlesque was played, and I was on at the rise of the curtain. One night in Finsbury Square my brougham was upset, and I was turned out partly

dressed in my 'Trebizonde' robes. Fortunately they were ample, and I pulled my kind of decorated gaberdine around me and surveyed the situation. Almost immediately a crowd of men and boys were similarly engaged.

" 'A conjuror off to the Raglan,' said one.

" 'No he ain't, he's agoin' to do a turn here. Now then, guvner, where's your bit of carpet? Where's your daggers and your spinning dishes, and your magic cabinets?'

" 'Yas,' exclaimed a third, 'tip us a sample o' yer style, ole chap, we'll put your oss on 'is legs. Come on, ere y' are.'

" 'And here *you* are if you'll get me a cab,' I said, showing them half-a-crown; and I can't tell you how glad I was when I got to the Gaiety and was told I was only three minutes late."

XII.

" I WAS playing a short engagement with my friend, James Rodgers, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Birmingham, when I received a letter from Lord Dudley asking what would be my terms to give my entertainment and bring my poodle dogs with me for a children's party at Witley Court.

" My first impression of the letter induced me to think it was a 'sell,' possibly the work of Sothern or some other practical joker; but my manager knew Lord Dudley's writing, and pronounced the application perfectly genuine, though evidently made under some misapprehension. I wrote to his lordship, informing him that he had made some mistake; that I never gave entertainments, either with or without dogs, at private parties; my place was the stage, the only platform upon which I thought an actor should perform in the way of his profession.

" I received in reply a very polite note, explain-

ing how the error had arisen, which I understood and appreciated at once. The fact was I had been present at a little party given by Mr. Gilbert Farquhar, at the house of his mother (Lady Farquhar), in Berkeley Street. Mr. Hollingshead, Mr. Arthur Sketchley, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Archibald Wortley, and others, having lunched at Berkeley Street, were informed by her ladyship that she was going to give a children's party on a certain afternoon, at which we all promised *con amore* to be present and help to amuse the little ones. It was a very pretty sight, and a very interesting occasion. The children of the Prince and Princess of Wales and Lord and Lady Dudley were there, and many others. We did conjuring tricks for them; we played the trial scene from 'Pickwick'; I was 'Serjeant Buzfuz,' Sketchley was 'Mrs. Cluppins,' George Grossmith played 'Winkle,' and Archie Wortley was 'Sam Weller'; I sung 'He always came home to tea,' the song I was then singing in a burlesque at the Gaiety. The children and Lady Farquhar were very delighted, thanked us profusely; and, after we had finished, a performer with some trained poodle dogs, who had been engaged and paid for by Hollingshead, was introduced to wind up the entertainment.

"The children, Lord Dudley was good enough to inform me, had gone home telling their parents how pleased they were with Mr. Toole and the dogs, and Lord Dudley had very naturally mixed the poodles and the comedian up together. Hence my correspondence with Witley Court."

XIII.

"WE have often discussed the Puritanical view of the stage," I said, "and I have a

memorandum of yours not to forget the Edinburgh letter."

"Yes, I know," said Toole; "a very amusing incident, and instructive, too, I think you will say. While I was acting at Edinburgh, some years ago—I was starring at the time—I received a letter, very well written, but a very canting letter, advising me to withdraw from the stage and lead a proper life: a man of my intelligence and ability ought to do something better."

"I did not answer the letter, but called on the writer on Sunday afternoon."

"He had a very handsome house in the suburbs. All the blinds were down."

"I rang the bell: sent in my name. There seemed a little commotion in the hall. I was shown into a room."

"Presently a solemn-looking gentleman in black entered. He spoke with rather a Scotch accent."

"'Glad to see you, Mr. Toole,' he said."

"'Thank you,' I said. 'I thought it best to call on you—better than writing. I am anxious to know what you propose to do for my wife and family.'"

"'What I propose to do?'"

"'Yes. You wish me to leave the stage. It is my living. I thought you might have some idea of an annuity.'"

"'An annuity? Eh! dear me! I had no idea of the sort.'"

"'Then what do you mean?'"

"'I was not thinking so much of you, Mr. Toole. It's the other people in the company.'"

"'My dear man,' I said, 'it's very likely they are very much better than I am. I may be quite a libertine, for all I know, compared with others; but we played *Dot* yesterday, and I am quite sure that a piece of that kind is calculated to make quite

as good an impression upon an audience as any sermon that you or your minister could deliver. It is full of humanity, and carries a striking and touching lesson.'

" 'Eh, mon! I like you very much, Mr. Toole, and I'm sure you're quite right. I laughed awfu' at ye when I saw you play the "Dodger."'

" 'Then what do you mean?'

" 'Eh, mon, it's the wife that's serious.'

" 'Oh. And that's the reason why all the blinds are down, is it?'

" 'The blinds are down,' he said, 'because it's the Sawbath, ye ken.'

" 'And do you think, then,' I asked, 'you are serving God by shutting out the beautiful fields and flowers that He has given you?'

" 'Aweel, I never thoct of it in that licht,' evidently gradually getting very much ashamed of himself.

" Finally he would insist upon introducing me to his wife, who invited me to tea. She was very severe and starchy at first, but we got on pleasantly at tea-time, and they have since invited me on several occasions to visit them."¹

¹ A correspondent, hearing that I am "writing about Mr. Toole," sends me the following:—"About 1860 or 1861, a lady visiting a well-known photographic establishment in Regent Street, where the portraits of most of the talent and beauty of the profession may be found, upon some of the latest productions being brought to her notice, made some disparaging remarks concerning actors and actresses, and generally expressed a very poor opinion of them, then calling, made of life, habits and associations. A clergyman present, overhearing her, quietly observed, 'Well, madam, I do not take your view of it. Both Mr. Toole and Mr. Bodford are my parishioners, and they attend my church regularly; and two better parishioners I do not wish for, both for attendance and for their support in every charitable work that is brought before them.'"

XIV.

THIS question of morality and the stage was referred to in a speech which Mr. Toole made at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, in 1883, on the last night of an engagement there, under the management of Messrs. Howard and Wyndham. He had appeared during the evening in *Your Life's in Danger*, *The Upper Crust*, and *The Spitalfields Weaver*. At the fall of the curtain he was called again and again, and, finally, a speech being loudly demanded, Mr. Toole said:—

“Ladies and Gentlemen,—As I am announced in the programme this evening to say a few words to my friends, I will commence at once. But I am in my usual state. I never know what these few words are to be, for, I assure you, it is a most difficult task to find words strong enough to thank you for the very hearty and genial reception accorded to me during this visit. I have often said that it is to me a great labour of love to play before my Edinburgh friends, and when friend Howard says to me, ‘How many pieces will you play in to-night?’ I reply, ‘As many as you please;’ for as long as my Edinburgh friends do not get tired of me, I assure you I do not get tired of acting to them. (Applause.) I have to thank also my friend Howard, with whom I have been ‘associated for many years—I taught him to play ‘Rob Roy’—(laughter)—for the admirable manner in which the pieces have been produced, and the genial way in which he always receives me. Like Mr. Doublechick, I do not like apologies, and I won’t apologize for not making a better speech; but I told my Glasgow friends a little story, and I do not see why you should not have the benefit of it. (Laughter.) Some years ago I dropped into a Music Hall in Ports-

mouth, just to study a little character. The admission was 2*d.*, and the reserved seats 3*d.* (Laughter.) I am happy to say my circumstances were such that I was able to take a reserved seat. (Laughter.) Well, there was a gentleman there who always wound up the entertainment by singing that exciting song, 'The Wolf.' (Laughter.) He had been singing it for twenty years; but that night he had evidently been partaking of something stronger than ginger beer, and when Mr. Jones was called upon to favour the company with 'The Wolf,' he began it something in this fashion. (Mr. Toole here, amid much laughter, sang in a husky voice the first line of the song, 'When the wolf he nightly prowls.') The audience had been a kindly and indulgent one, but his style was more than they could stand, and some hissing was heard. The performer tried it again (Mr. Toole again mimicking him) with the same result. Then the performer, pulling himself together, said: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am not surprised at your indignation. The fact is I have sung this wolf hundreds of times, and I have sung all the air off him.' (Great laughter.) Well, I must tell you I had to-day a letter from an old friend of yours and mine, Mr. Henry Irving—(applause)—who expressed regret at not being able to appear this year in Edinburgh. He is hard at work in preparing for his great revival of *Much Ado about Nothing*. He said in his letter, 'Make a nice speech to my Edinburgh friends for me,'—but of course I could not lay claim to do that, I am too modest—(laughter), 'and say it would afford me great delight to appear before them previous to going on my American trip next year.' There are two or three reasons why I regret the absence of Irving, who has done so much for the stage, because there is a matter which 'does make me

so wild'—(laughter)—on which he could have spoken so well. I read a letter the other day in the *Scotsman*, which, as an actor, I think one is bound to protest against. (Applause.) It was written evidently by one of the Chadband School, and it counselled young men to avoid the theatre, where vice and immorality were made to appear fascinating and attractive. I am sure you will agree that it is a piece of impertinence for any one at this time of day to write such a letter—(applause)—especially in a city like Edinburgh, where Sir Walter Scott lived, who was a great lover and frequenter of the theatre. (Applause.) The theatre is now supported by the highest and best in the land. It was not long since I, with a little company, had the great honour and pleasure of being received as guests by the highest lady and gentleman in the land—the Prince and Princess of Wales—and of playing before them at their Sandringham home. (Applause.) And it is a pleasure to think that so many gentlemen connected with the church now attend the theatre. I am sure few of them would countenance such remarks as those to which I refer. They are a relic of a bygone age. (Applause.) I shall leave them, ladies and gentleman, to the writer's conscience; I shall not discuss here the private character of an eminent actress whom the writer mentions—an actress whom I had never the pleasure to meet in private—on whom he made some horrible remarks. I have sent a copy of the *Scotsman* with that gentleman's letter in it to her husband—(loud applause)—who doubtless will treat the traducer of his wife as he deserves. (Applause.) I feel bound as an actor, who has met with so much kindness on the Edinburgh stage, to protest against any one making such uncharitable remarks. (Applause.) But I will not

detain you further, for the hour is late and I have still some classic ballads—(laughter)—to bring before you. I have been spending a little time with my friend Sims Reeves—(laughter)—and you will hear how my singing has vastly improved. (Laughter.) My friend Howard, indeed, intends to bring me out in Italian opera—(laughter)—on my next visit to Edinburgh. And when you are in London, if you drop into Toole's Theatre, I am sure you will get a right hearty welcome." (Cheers.)

Mr. Toole is one of the most successful of public speakers. Whatever the occasion he is invariably equal to it. A collection of his post-prandial utterances would fill a volume. I am tempted to give a few additional instances in illustration of his pleasant faculty of oratorical chat. In July, 1875, when Mr. Henry Irving presided over the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, at Freemason's Tavern, Mr. Toole, in proposing "The Health of the Lord Mayor," said it had been customary to suppose they could not have too much of a good thing, but he saw so many good actors who could have proposed this toast so much better than himself, that he felt some diffidence in undertaking the duty. Having recently returned from the United States, he need scarcely say he was "interviewed," and that he had the honour of being received by the President, who, amongst other things, asked him if he was not an Irishman. He asked, in reply, if the President had ever heard of St. Mary Axe, because he was born there—in the Lord Mayor's ward. (Laughter.) Whether this was told to the gentlemen of the Press or not he did not know. The Lord Mayor had referred to "Richard the Third," a part which might soon be played by his friend

Mr. Irving, who, he hoped, would not interfere with the classic performances at the Gaiety Theatre, where he (Mr. Toole) was at present engaged. Lately there had been a great noise, as he thought, behind the scenes, but on inquiring into the cause, he was told it was "two Scotch gentlemen fighting over the way."² (Laughter.) Since then he had closed the windows. (Laughter.) He felt this hospitable reception, as they all did, a great compliment, and he hoped when the Lord Mayor came to the theatre they might be able to entertain him. He could only say that, among other achievements, the Lord Mayor, whose health he now proposed, had won all their hearts.

Three years later Mr. Toole presided over the Anniversary Dinner of the Royal Theatrical Fund. The story of the "Tiny Tim" who ate the goose (which appears on page 49) is, as previously stated, a reminiscence of the Chairman's speech on that occasion, the leading points of which it will be interesting to reprint. In giving the toast of the evening, Mr. Toole said :—"Gentlemen,—Three years ago, when my dear friend and old professional comrade, Henry Irving, had the heavy responsibility I have now to discharge, of proposing from this chair the toast of the evening, he related how twenty years before, a boy, he had stood at the door of the London Tavern, eagerly watching the guests as they assembled for this Fund's dinner, delighted when he recognized the face of some popular actor or celebrated man. That boy was Irving himself, who has continued his hero-worship until he too has become famous. (Applause.) I, gentlemen, have to ask your forbearance and sympathy for another boy, a different kind of boy.

² Mr. Toole's dressing-room at the Gaiety overlooked the front of the Lyceum Theatre.

My boy attended the first Festival of the Royal General Theatrical Fund three-and-thirty years ago, also held at the London Tavern, when the late Mr. Charles Dickens presided, holding every one spell-bound by his graceful allusions and charming humour—except that the commonplace boy I am introducing to you, who, in spite of his admiration for acting and his early reverence for Mr. Charles Dickens, was too busy cramming himself with jellies and creams behind a screen to be spell-bound. (Laughter.) He was the son of a well-known City Toastmaster, who was often taken by his father to banquets to sit in the gallery with the ladies, or to be slyly fed by the waiter in some secure hiding-place within convenient distance of the sweets. That same boy has, in the way of business, eaten a good deal of pasteboard food of a less toothsome character since then, for the benefit of a great variety of theatrical funds, and is now rather bewildered at his own boldness in presuming to occupy this chair—a position which he has seen filled by so many distinguished men; and in having to appeal to you seriously on behalf of the Profession we have met to serve. It is not for a boy with this early training—a jelly-boy in fact; ahem! no connection with Dickens's Mrs. Jellyboy, and Boola Boola Gha—to attempt to take you over the ground which has been so skilfully, so eloquently, and so pathetically travelled by the illustrious men who have preceded him; but this boy wishes to touch your pockets through your hearts, and induce you to give large subscriptions to a most admirable Fund, a Fund which preserves self-respect by enabling the actor to help himself, and to make some provision against the day of disaster and misfortune. (Applause.) Dropping third person metaphors, perhaps you found out who my boy was as soon as I

mentioned him, for as I left my cab this evening I heard a voice from a little crowd at the door say, "That's Toole!" and another voice reply, "In coorse it is, stoopid; everybody knows Toole;" so as disguise is impossible, I will in my own name tell you of an experience of a stage supper which the name of Mr. Charles Dickens recalls to me, and which is not without its bearing on the business before us." (Applause.)

[Here the speaker told the story of the child-actress who, as "Tiny Tim," developed an extraordinary appetite.]

"Not a bad illustration this, gentlemen, of the kindly spirit we so often find behind the scenes—the spirit of helpfulness and unaffected generosity—which, I am bound to say, distinguishes the dramatic profession, and to which I hope to appeal with success this evening. Most actors could quote by the score similar examples of unselfishness in the young—and you know actors never do grow old. The late Mr. Paul Bedford called with me on Mr. T. P. Cooke, at his house in Torrington Square, with the view of enlisting his services in aid of a charitable benefit then being organized; and, in the course of conversation, Mrs. Cooke and another old lady being present, we touched on the drama of *One Tree Hill*, when T. P. Cooke (Tippy Cooke) said, 'Very unfortunate, would be glad to oblige, but there was no part *I* could play in it—only one sailor—and he was an *old* man, which made it quite out of the question for me, of course.' Considering Mr. Cooke was at that time well on in the seventies, I may be excused for doubting if successful actors can grow old—(laughter and applause);—but it is for the unsuccessful I plead to-night; for those who have lost their powers, or have retired, from ill-health or advancing years

without sufficient resources ; and I ask you not to think, because I have not attempted to be pathetic that there is no pathos in the subject, or any want of serious, earnest purpose in my aim. The merits and benefits of this most admirable association have been dwelt upon and extolled in past years by his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, and such men as Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. Thackeray, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Irving, and last year by that warm friend of the drama and its professors, his Grace the Duke of Beaufort. I cannot hope to approach their eloquence, or their power of bringing gracefully before an assemblage such as this, the claims it is the duty of a Chairman to advocate ; but, speaking as an actor, on behalf of actors and respecting actors, I will say that for economy of management, for plain fulfilment of the purpose for which it was designed, for freedom from jobbery, and I may say from snobbery—for bringing relief and cheerful succour for those worsted in the battle of life, for an honest endeavour to inculcate manly independence throughout the ranks of a profession, this Royal General Theatrical Fund is second to no institution in the country. I would appeal earnestly to all young actors and actresses to join it. I pledge my word to *them*, that they will never regret the small annual sum it may cost them ; and I pledge my word to *you*, gentlemen, that whatever you think fit to subscribe this evening will be properly and faithfully applied. I leave purposely to our indefatigable treasurer, and most excellent man of business, Mr. John Hollingshead, the duties of explaining to you the statistics of the fund ; and I would like to tell you—as he will be too modest to do so—how splendidly he has worked since he has been treasurer, and how through his untiring exertions the Fund has been enormously

benefited. Before sitting down, I am reminded of a circumstance that occurred to a celebrated comedian, the late Mr. Harley. In the early part of his professional career, and before he came to London, he took a long journey in a coach through Buxton—I don't mean our old friend, but Buxton in Derbyshire—before railways were known; and he had as a fellow-traveller an elderly gentleman who became greatly interested in the vivacity and entertaining powers of Harley, who delighted him with a fund of anecdote. At the end of the journey the old gentleman shook hands with Harley, heartily thanked him for his pleasant companionship, and said he had never enjoyed travelling so much. Well, as they say in drama, 'time rolled on;' Harley never saw his fellow-traveller again, but during his first London engagement at the English Opera House, now the Lyceum, he learned that the old gentleman had died, bequeathing Harley a handsome town house well furnished, with a cellar fully stocked with admirably selected wines. Now, gentlemen, I assure you I have, ever since I heard this story, now many years ago, tried hard to make myself agreeable to all elderly gentlemen—(laughter)—I meet in my travels, but nothing has yet come of it, and I am prepared to discount my chances this evening—nay, this moment. If there be present any, I will not say elderly, because I've shown that the glamour of things theatrical prevents *our* growing old, but any gentleman, of any age, who has derived the faintest scintilla of amusement from anything he has heard to-night, I implore him not to remember me in his testamentary dispositions, but to gladden my heart far more than that would do, by giving now, this evening, while he is alive—I think I may say all alive—as largely as his means allow, to the fund on whose behalf I most

earnestly appeal. (Cheers.) Following the example of the great people at Berlin, we are now holding our Congress, and I am Plenipotentiary for the Royal General Theatrical Fund. Gentlemen, it is only by your liberal aid and generous co-operation that our Congress can insure peace and tranquillity of mind to the unhappy, help to the unfortunate, and solace to the bereaved. Gentlemen, it is in your power to achieve these noble ends, and to make me very happy as well. For let this Theatrical Congress of 1878 be quoted hereafter as having fulfilled its mission handsomely and effectually, and I shall look back upon my presidency with as deep a satisfaction as Prince Bismarck; for you will have made me feel that, inadequate as my best personal efforts have been, your indulgence has overlooked my shortcomings as a Chairman and a speaker, while the claims, the merits, and the usefulness of this Theatrical Fund have, like our great countryman, Lord Beaconsfield, driven their points home, and have spoken to your hearts and feelings the best kind of English with vigour and success. Gentlemen, I now leave in your hands, with the fullest confidence, the toast of the evening, 'Prosperity to the Royal General Theatrical Fund.' " (Loud cheers.)

Responding to the toast of "The Visitors" at a recent banquet of the Scottish Water Colour Society at Glasgow:—"Gentlemen,—Later on in the evening, in the character of 'Paul Pry,' I have to make a remark to the assembly, 'I hope I don't intrude;' and you will permit me, on behalf of the guests, to remark, we hope we don't intrude. But I am sure we do not after the very handsome banquet you have given us. I don't know how all of you will end this happy festival, but I know I shall finish by going to the theatre to-night. (Laughter.)

It is for me a great delight, and I feel sure to all of us, to spend this charming afternoon here. (Hear, hear.) It is my good fortune and privilege to be the personal friend of a great number of artists in England, Ireland, and Scotland; amongst them Sir Frederick Leighton, president of the Royal Academy; the president of the Royal Scottish Academy, and indeed of all the good fellows connected with the art, and I may say I never enjoy myself better than when I am in the company of painters, because they are the tenderest, the gentlest of men. I spend most of my leisure time in going to the Royal Academy, and the Grosvenor. I was kept away from the Grosvenor Gallery once, though, from the fact that my portrait was hanging in that gallery, and being a modest man I was rather shy about it. (Laughter.) There was one day that I was looking at it, and two old ladies were looking at it too. One old lady said to the other, 'Who is that?' 'My dear, I do not know,' said the other old lady. 'It is the portrait of a gentleman.' That was complimentary to me at any rate. (Laughter.) 'He looks very serious,' said one of the old ladies again; 'I think he is a clergyman.' (Laughter.) 'Or a scientific lecturer,' said the other—(renewed laughter)—and then, looking at the catalogue, she added, 'It is the portrait of a Mr. Toole.' The other said, 'I don't know him, but I fancy he is an actor.' (Laughter.) 'Poor fellow,' was the other's reply, 'he is a tragedian, he looks so sad.' (Mr. Toole said this with such characteristic humour that loud and prolonged laughter followed.) I must thank you very much for the very charming way in which you have treated us as guests. It is a great privilege to be here. Three years ago I happened to be in Glasgow when this delightful gathering was held,

and in attempting to make a speech I remember I said that if you invited me again I should try to make a better. It has been rather worse. (Laughter.) But if you invite me next time I shall try to do better. (Renewed laughter.) You know Mr. Alma Tadema. I will tell you a little story about Mr. Tadema. He is full of fun, like me, you know. He and my friend Colin Hunter are nearly always



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laying traps for me in the way of chaff. 'I should like, Tadema,' I said to him, 'your advice about a picture. A friend of mine wants to get a picture into a gallery.' Mr. Tadema went on to expatiate about the different galleries. Perhaps I should try to get it into the Royal Academy, and the Grosvenor Gallery is very good. Then he

asked what the picture was like, and I produced the picture. It was a small, unpretentious thing, a common little drawing of myself in character—(laughter)—fourpence a thousand, you know. (Renewed laughter.) Now, just a word of advice to the artists. I happened once to be lecturing on painting, and I made the remark that the best thing an artist could do to improve his taste was to clean his *palate*. (Laughter.) But I won't detain you any longer. I hope we shall all behave ourselves so well that you will invite us another time." (Laughter and applause.)

At Liverpool and Manchester, at the latter end of 1887, Mr. Toole followed Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. They had followed Mr. Irving and Miss Kate Terry. The Kendals are deservedly popular in the North, but on this occasion Liverpool had not been as lavish as formerly in its patronage of their entertainments. Mrs. Kendal made a speech on the occasion in which she seemed to upbraid Manchester for its infidelity to the house of Kendal. Her husband stood by her side while she spoke this memorable address.²

² "It is many years since Liverpool playgoers have had so rich a choice of dramatic art as they have had during the past week, when at one of our leading theatres Mr. Irving and his company have appeared in the *chef-d'œuvre* of the many famous Lyceum productions, while at the other Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have presented a series of high-class dramas, exquisite alike in instruction and in representation. . . . Notwithstanding the extraordinary counter-attraction in Liverpool, the Kendals at the Court Theatre have been drawing exceedingly good houses, and their performances have been received, as usual, with great cordiality. At the close of the play of *The Ironmaster* on Saturday evening, Mrs. Kendal appeared before the curtain in company with Mr. Kendal, and delivered the following brief address, which was received with loud applause:—'My good friends, we have again been in Liverpool, and have met with the same encouragement that we have always previously experienced here. It is true that we have on this occasion met with some very strong opposition

Some short time previously Mr. Wilson Barrett had spoken of his boyish ambition "five-and-twenty years ago," when he had stood as a boy outside the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, vowing to himself that one day he would play "Hamlet" in that very house; Mrs. Kendal had also distinctly announced her intention to retire from the stage when she reached the age of forty. It is necessary to mention these incidents for the non-actor reader to understand the following speech which Mr. Toole made at the close of his Manchester season. During the interval between *A Mint of Money* and *Paw Claudian*, Mr. Toole stepped to the front of the curtain and delivered three of his well-known addresses upon "Chemistry," "Astronomy," and "China," all, of course, amusing. He then addressed his audience as follows:—"It would be difficult for me to convey to you in a few words how grateful I am for your constant kindness to me on each occasion

by the great production of *Faust* at another theatre. For the first time we have seen tiny vacant spaces before us, and I have noticed some white antimacassars, which I abominate, *entre nous*. Still I shall come here again. I thought at first that you might probably have been frightened in consequence of the rubbish which appeared in the papers the other day about fires in theatres. Now I may say that I have been every night on the stage for I do not like to say how many pears. I have been surrounded by numerous jets of gas, and a great deal of lime-light has been thrown on us both. But we have never met with any accident. So that when you read in the papers of these alarms about the danger of fire, don't believe them. I assure you that you will be just as safe in a theatre as in the street, for in both places we must trust in Providence for our lives.' (Applause.) It will be observed that Mrs. Kendal in her kindly desire to reassure theatre audiences as to the safety of theatres from fire, altogether omitted all reference to the far more fatal cause of loss of life, that of panic. However, everybody will give the genial actress credit for good intentions in departing from the customary rule."—*Liverpool Daily Post*, October 10th, 1887.

of my visits to this city. This has been one of the most pleasant visits I have ever paid to Manchester. It is very difficult to know what to talk about. It is so much the custom in Manchester for ladies to make speeches—(laughter)—that I feel rather nervous. (Renewed laughter.) Of course had my wife been travelling with me—(laughter)—I might have been able to persuade her to do it—(laughter)—but if any lady would like to step down here and say a few words I should be very glad. (Laughter.) I suppose it is no good telling you, ladies and gentlemen, that I am going to save up money and retire when I am forty years of age, because I have just turned that point—(laughter)—and I do not think of retiring for a good many years. (Loud applause.) I love my profession too much for that, and I am too proud of your applause and of the friends I have made in Manchester. (Applause.) A friend of mine said to me the other day, ‘What about your popularity? Why don’t you get the horses taken out of your carriage somewhere?’ Well, in the first place I do not keep a carriage, and I never saw the horses in it. (Laughter.) In the next a gentleman in France, when he was told, ‘Just now you had your horses taken out of your carriage,’ replied, ‘Yes, and I have never seen them since.’ (Laughter.) Well, then, I will tell you a little story. I might begin: ‘About twenty-five years ago’—(hear, hear, and laughter.) Oh, I see you know all about that. (Laughter.) Well, then, I must thank Captain Bainbridge earnestly for the very admirable way in which he has produced my pieces and for his kindness and courtesy to me. There is no theatre in which I play with greater pleasure, or which has more pleasant associations. I must also thank the gentlemen of the press. A friend of mine said

to me, 'You never get cut up in Manchester.' I replied, 'I do not know about that. I often appear in three pieces.' (Laughter.) I have seen great changes since I first appeared in Manchester, many years ago, but there is one thing that never changes, and that is the warm support, the hearty greeting, and the welcome which you always give to me. I thank you very sincerely, and I hope the same friendship will always exist between us." (Loud applause.)

At the close of *The Butler* season in London, the acting-manager, being loudly called on to speak, said:—"Ladies and gentlemen,—I beg your pardon, but you don't happen to have seen a great coat about anywhere, do you?—rather a nice one, almost new, nice velvet collar, silk lining, and all that sort of thing, don't you know. Cannot think what I have done with the overcoat. Anything in the pockets? I should think there is something in the pockets! There are two left-hand gloves, if they weren't they wouldn't be left; a copy of Bacon-Shakspeare or Shakspeare-Bacon—I hope somebody will be able to save that somehow. There is a season ticket for Toole's Theatre—the number is known and stopped. There are four free admissions to the stalls on payment of the customary fees. (Laughter.) There is my latch-key—how on earth I shall be able to get in to-night without raising the neighbourhood I don't know. There is a farcical comedy by an amateur, in eight acts. Any one finding it is requested to forward it without delay to the Inspector of Nuisances. (Laughter.) Then there are three cough lozenges, which the finder may keep for his trouble. There are six autographs of J. L. Toole, which will be sold to defray expenses. The eighth part of a captain's biscuit, which may be sent to the British Museum; and worst of all, there is *my speech*.

(Roars of laughter.) Any one may have all the other things if they will only give me back my speech. I thought of sending a *speechial* constable after it, but here I am, utterly speechless, though perhaps you wouldn't think it. The worst of it is somebody may have stolen my speech; he may be learning it now, and may deliver it in Trafalgar Square. (Laughter.) If you should hear anything extra good at any of the theatres during the next few weeks, you may depend it is quite likely some actor or dramatist has found my coat. (Laughter.) I won't detain you any longer, but I must tell you how glad I am to see you and to come home again. There are many reasons for coming home; I felt that many London friends wanted to see *The Butler*, and had I stayed away much longer they would have been put to the expense of going down to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, or some other fairy spot, so I thought I'd come home; besides, I live in London, and the rent is going on. (Laughter.) Talking of rent reminds me of a landlord who told me in Dublin, recently, that when he told one of his tenants he intended raising his rent he replied, 'I'm glad to hear it, sor, for I've been trying to raise it myself for the last six months, but devil a bit could I do it.' (Loud laughter.) I produce a new play by Mr. and Mrs. Merivale at the end of January next, or rather, I should say, when my company have cooled down from the excitement of the Bacon and Shakspeare discussion, for upon my calling upon several members of the company at breakfast-time the other morning I found that, instead of studying their parts, they were engrossed upon Bacon. Shakspeare they always study in the evening. (Laughter.) During the Christmas holidays I shall produce Charles Dickens' *Cricket on the Hearth*, for which the box-office is

now already open. (Applause.) This is a gentle hint. I won't detain you, but thank you for the warm welcome you have given me to-night. I know you are all anxious to look for my coat. Kindly let me know if you find that speech. I hope we shall have a very merry season. Come and see me as often as you can. "I wish you good-night." (Loud applause.)

Many persons will be inclined to think that the lost coat with the speech in the pocket is an oratorical fiction; but it is not so. Mr. Toole had thought out a few words to say and had jotted them down. He left me at the Ship at Brighton, where, half an hour before his train started for town, he read over the points of his proposed speech. Many of the best impromptu orations of the most eminent speakers are said to be made in this way. But when Toole said good-bye, and hurried off by express to his London work, he carried away some one else's overcoat and left his own behind, and with it, safe in the inner pocket, his extemporaneous speech. When he got to town he wired me, "Have left my coat and speech at the Ship." There was, of course, no time to send them on, not even to telegraph his humorous oration. And this is how it came to pass that "The Butler" made, I believe, a much more laughable address to his audience than the one he had arranged to deliver.

XV.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN KING
WILLIAM STREET.

The actor-manager's room—"Making up"—A notable picture
—Reminiscences of the Adelphi—The poor man who

did not applaud—Dreaming—Toole's admiration for Sims Reeves—The solace of the famous tenor's ballads—At St. Anne's—A lesson for young actors—The stage of yesterday and to-day—London and provincial audiences—French and English actors—M. Coquelin and tragedy—The Bosjesmen and their showman.

I.

No professional room, studio, sanctum, laboratory, or what not, is so interesting to the general reader as the dressing-room of a popular actor. I recall a sketch I wrote years ago of Mr. Irving "making



IN MR. TOOLE'S DRESSING-ROOM.

ready to go on" as "Charles the First," which went the rounds of the Press, the foreign Press more particularly, and which crops up every now and then as a new discovery under the scissors of youthful sub-editors. I propose to give "Charles the First" a companion picture in "Caleb Plummer."

On the right of the stall entrance of Toole's

Theatre a private door, screened from view by a heavy portière, leads to the stage-box. If you are permitted to descend the short flight of stairs beyond, turn to the right at the bottom, and at the end of a long and somewhat dingy passage you will come upon the actor-manager's dressing-room. You will have been preceded thither during Mr. Toole's management by many a distinguished lady and gentleman. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has been there before you; so also have the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lord Wolseley, Lord Randolph Churchill, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, Mr. Chamberlain, Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Mary Anderson, Mr. Irving, Canon Farrar, and many others well known to fame. The ladies have received as mementoes of their visits one of those little boxes of bonbons which Mr. Toole keeps in a drawer of his desk for his lady visitors, and the gentlemen are not forgotten in the way of such choice or simple refreshment as is considered most acceptable by their naturally thirsty natures.

II.

It is a notable little room, characteristically decorated with theatrical pictures and photographs of friends and Royal patrons. The door opens in a corner of the room, leaving space behind it for the actor's dressing-table, and for an interesting collection of pictorial treasures which cover every available inch of wall. It is a very simple dressing-table with an ordinary looking-glass, on each side of which there is the usual wire-protected gas-burner. On the table in some confusion are hand-glasses, puff-boxes, chalks, wig-paste, combs and brushes, a small vase of fresh flowers, and if the real work of dressing is going on (which, of course, it is not

as a rule when visitors are admitted) you may once in a way see Mr. Fox, the famous wig-maker, in attendance.

"I only employ Fox about once a year, when I play 'Caleb Plummer' or some unusual part," remarked the actor the other night, moving his right eye to emphasize his remarks and call my attention to their impression on Fox, "because as a rule I can get along best alone, much better, I think, artistically; there are little subtleties of colour and other things which one cannot expect Fox to understand."

"Well, I don't know about that," Fox replied. "Mr. — and Mr. — wouldn't think of going on any night without I looked in to see that all was right."

"Ah, I daresay," remarked Toole; "but they have not made the art of make-up, and particularly of old men with bald heads, the study I have; my own dresser is first-rate at wigs. And how about Mr. Irving? Why, he invents his own, and his clever little dresser is a perfect artist!"

"And yet we make for Mr. Irving," Fox replied, with a somewhat supercilious smile, which was converted into an anxious one when the call-boy made his last announcement, and the next moment Toole had slipped out of his hands, and, with a wink that was not at all in keeping with the character of "Caleb Plummer," hurried to the stage, and proceeded to enter the honest and virtuous domicile of the Perrybingles, which he did in his own inimitable way, as the living embodiment of Dickens's most lovable creation.

While Mr. Toole as "Caleb" is receiving his parcel of dolls' eyes, and praising the good qualities of "Mr. Tackleton," we will look round his room and make an inventory of his pictures. On

the wall, the centre of which is occupied by the dressing-table, is a portrait of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, in his Scotch bonnet, flanked on either hand by a recent portrait of Henry Irving in private dress, and John Billington as "Lord Hesketh" in *The Upper Crust*. Packed close by are admirable portraits of Mr. Bancroft and Henry J. Byron, the latter a very characteristic drawing in water-colour by Alfred Bryan, depicting Byron as his friends love to remember him, in good health, and good spirits, and with a cigar in his hand as if he had just taken it from his lips to say one of those clever things which are associated with kindly recollections of him, and of happy evenings made happier by his genial presence and sparkling wit. Near the Byron picture is an admirable portrait of Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, in a dignified and artistic pose, and matching this photograph on the other side of the wall a likeness of Mr. Routledge, which might have been taken just after his first defeat as a candidate for Parliament, so sad, yet defiant, so conscious of having done his duty, is the expression the camera has fixed upon the sensitive paper. Occupying prominent places among these works are several reminiscences of early Adelphi days, notably a drawing from *The Willow Copse*, representing Paul Bedford and Toole in one of their scenes, Toole being the "Augustus;" and an excellent photograph of Mr. Webster as "Triplet," and Mrs. Stirling as "Peg Woffington" in *Masks and Faces*, "Triplet" with his fiddle, and "Mrs. Triplet" (old Mrs. Stoker) sitting by the table.

On the wall facing the fireplace of this cosy room of the popular comedian, are a series of heads of characters once represented by John

Parry (who has a remarkable successor in Mr. Corney Grain), portraits of Grimaldi in private dress and as the clown; Keeley as "Gregory;" Mr. William Black as an admiring friend; Sarah Bernhardt, an admirable study painted upon ivory; a startling caricature of Henry Irving as "King Philip" in his wonderful study from *Queen Mary*; a caricature (by Phil May) of Irving, Bancroft, and Toole, who are supposed to have been dining out,



MADAME SARAH BERNHARDT.

and are going home merrily; Toole as "Caleb Plummer," sitting by his spotted horse; Paul Bedford and Toole represented in character in the farce of *The Pretty Horsebreaker*; Mary Anderson, a lovely effigy of a lovely woman; young Herbert Reeves, wonderfully like his father—one of Toole's oldest friends; Ward, in Burnand's funny burlesque of *Claudian*, representing

the hermit so well played in the original by Willard ; Toole on his marble throne as " Wilson Barrett," made up with singular fidelity by the aid of a wax nose, which was a nightly trouble and anxiety all through the long run of *Paw Clawdian* ; a copy of the famous picture of Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy ; and several



MISS ELLEN TERRY.

groups taken from the current comedies and farces represented by Mr. Toole and his company.

On the right of the fireplace are some classic pictures representing ancient Rome, mementoes of travel, rather incongruously mixed up with a group representing her Majesty the Queen and the Royal family ; Liston, as " Paul Pry ;" Sothern, as the " Crushed Tragedian ;" Webster, Mrs. Stirling, Mrs. Stoker and the children in the

Masks and Faces scenes, where "Peg" visits them for the first time. In the centre of these is a large water-colour drawing of Toole as the "Artful Dodger," painted in America, and made realistic in the artist's estimation by its surroundings. The "Dodger" is standing in a street, on one side of which is Drury Lane Theatre and on the other St. Paul's Cathedral. Over the mantel, upon which a fine mirror reflects the pictures on the other side of the room, are displayed portraits of David James, George Loveday, Sims Reeves, Ellen Terry, Florence, the American comedian; on the shelf are a few ornaments, and again a vase or two of freshly-cut flowers are to be seen as part of the simple decorations.

III.

I MUST not forget to mention the framed certificate of a vote of thanks from the Yorkshire School for the Blind, in recognition of an entertainment given to the children by Mr. Toole and some members of his company in the spacious lecture-room of that notable institution. A visit to the schools is mentioned in a previous chapter. I don't suppose any artist has ever devoted so much time to the amusement of poor people in hospitals, asylums, and of children in charitable schools as Mr. Toole. A record of these things would fill a volume in itself. He is fond of talking of his experiences on these occasions, the delight of the inmates of convalescent wards gathered together and chuckling in a feeble way at his *Trying a Magistrate*; the less advanced sufferers lying upon their beds to form part of the audience, their pale faces lighted up with smiles. At King's Cross Hospital the patients are carried on their beds to the staircases and landings while Mr. Toole gives his entertainments in the hall, "a touching sight,"

he says, "which makes it a little difficult sometimes to be funny; but they are anxious to have a laugh, and often they will applaud quite heartily, forgetting for the moment all their ailments. The other day at one of these affairs I noticed a rather stalwart fellow in his bed. He seemed very pleased with the comic lecture, the Magistrate, and with a funny tale I told them. I noticed him particularly, he had such a cheerful face; and I did not fail to observe, with not quite so much pleasure as I noticed his pleasant face, that he did not applaud. I went to him afterwards and before I could speak to him he said, 'Thank you, Mr. Toole, I have been so very much pleased; it is very kind of you,' and then, as if he were about to put forth one of his arms, he said, 'I only wish I could have joined in the applause, but you see I have only one hand, my right arm has been amputated.' It gave me a shock, because I was on the eve, I believe, of asking him, being so pleased, why he did not applaud. The necessity of the encouragement of a little applause to an actor is everything; if people don't applaud, you are apt to think you are boring them."

The back part of this little room behind the scenes is screened off with a curtain; if it is partly drawn you get a glimpse of a sideboard, and here the actor exercises the power of summoning spirits from the vasty deep, and not only spirits but wines, not only wines but sweets, and occasionally a dish of sandwiches, and in the season he has been known to conjure therefrom examples of our finest native oysters. In the centre of the room there is a writing-table, frequently full of that curious correspondence which ought to make a very interesting chapter in these Reminiscences; but you never know until the critic has seen your

chapters which are interesting and which are not, any more than you know which are the best scenes in a play until those serious and learned gentlemen have sat in front of the curtain at its first representation and witnessed the performance of the piece.

"Yes," said Toole, one night when he sat in this little room after the theatre was closed, "I like to have my friends about me, if not in the flesh in the pictures. I have often looked round this room in my occasional quiet moments and felt that it is all a dream, and as if I were playing a part all through and shall awaken one day like 'Uncle Dick' and find myself at that desk in the city. And if I did, what a time I should have had! Poor dear Wright, Keeley and Webster, and Paul Bedford, I think they would belong perhaps to the happiest days of my life. When one is young and getting on, when one is succeeding in the very work one loves and putting a little money by for one's wife and family, that is sure to be a very happy time, is it not? Wouldn't you say so, not only in your private character but as a novelist?"

Toole has a habit of considering me in this double capacity, which accounts for the fact perhaps that he is delighted when I have time to go out with him "character-hunting," as he calls it.

I replied in perfect agreement with him that he had suggested what is no doubt the happiest time in the lives of most men.

"Of course, if I did awaken like Dick I should have escaped some misery and sorrow, such misery and sorrow as I at one time did not think it possible to undergo and live. After my poor boy died I felt for a long time that life was positively unbearable; but at last one has to remember one does not live for oneself alone, and one has to

remember that others suffer too, that one is not the only person whom Heaven afflicts ; but there, we will not talk of that. You know what I often do when I feel depressed, going home in a cab ? I have told you before. It is interesting to recall it at the present moment. It sounds odd, but we all do curious things, I suppose, if we only cared to confess them. Of all the music I have ever heard, nothing has ever touched me so much as the singing of Sims Reeves ; I have sat and heard him, and cried many a time, especially at 'Tom Bowling,' the 'Death of Nelson,' and 'Farewell my Trim Built Wherry ;' these songs, as he sung them, represent to me as deep a pathos as the human voice is capable of expressing, and even in the more or less merry songs of that incomparable vocalist, I have always found a touch of melancholy. I heard you say the other day that a wonderful procession you saw on the Grand Canal in Venice affected you so deeply that you felt emotional ; it was so beautiful that it seemed to become pathetic, though it was full of sunshine and gaiety. Well, that is how I feel somehow in regard to Sims Reeves, whether he sings 'My Pretty Jane,' 'Come into the Garden, Maud,' or 'Tom Bowling ;' and often, when I have felt sad, it has been a comfort to me to hum these songs, to hum them pretty loudly, when the rattle of the cab-wheels were especially noisy, and there was no chance of any one hearing me but myself. A charming fellow, Sims Reeves, so modest, has such a wonderful method, and a voice that will never be excelled."

IV.

"DID I ever tell you about my calling on Reeves at St. Anne's, near Blackpool ? Well, I happened to be playing in that enormous hall or theatre by

the sea at Blackpool to eight or ten thousand people a day, where Sarah Bernhardt, you re-



MR. SIMS REEVES.

member, on seeing the audience, was taken suddenly ill, and did not act ; there was a lawsuit

about it. I don't wonder at her fright ; the people come into the gardens in their thousands : for certain parts of the hall they have nothing extra to pay to see the performance in the theatre. They are a capital audience ; it is impossible for many of them to hear ; some of them can, of course ; but they see the movement and colour of the stage and all that ; some of them have seen the plays before, and recall the incidents in their memory ; others are in a theatre for the first time, and find an interest in the performances though they be in dumb-show ; and, as I said before, they are most attentive.

“As I heard Sims Reeves was staying at St. Anne's not far away, I thought I would go and see him. I went to the hotel ; they said Mr. Sims Reeves had just strolled out ; they did not think he had gone far ; he had only a few minutes ago finished luncheon. I went upon the beach, he was not there ; nor was anybody else, for it was not exactly in the season, and St. Anne's is a quiet, rather unfrequented place. I left the beach and went into the hotel grounds—very pretty and extensive gardens and walks. Under a shady tree, comfortably seated with a newspaper, I saw my friend. He did not see me. I went quietly behind him and gave him a snatch of ‘My Pretty Jane,’ rendered as lovingly as possible, after his most delicate manner. No response. So I thought I would rouse him up, and I began with an imitation of his *forte* style, ‘’Twas in Trafalgar Square !’ I had not finished when he turned round, with much amazement expressed upon his features, and—it was not Sims Reeves !

“I felt awfully sold, and I think I blushed ! All I could say was, ‘I beg your pardon.’ I walked away chagrined, and sought consolation in con-

templating the divine loveliness of nature, as our friend So-and-so, the poet, would say.

"Presently I met the same old gentleman to whom I had been singing. He had folded up his newspaper and was walking about. I went up to him. He did not seem inclined to stop. But I said, 'Sir, I fear you would think my conduct very strange just now ; the truth is, I thought you were Sims Reeves,' whereupon he literally rushed away, and when I went into the hotel they told me he thought I was an escaped lunatic.

"He had no sense of humour, you see ; and it is my misfortune sometimes to have too much."

V.

WE drifted from this subject into the art of acting, how it should be studied, the present condition of the stage, and kindred topics ; I was desirous of obtaining from him some more comprehensive information in regard to his own methods and views of stage-work than I had hitherto extracted from him. The result was a more than usually sustained expression of opinion, the following note of which is very interesting. Toole tells a story with a careful eye for detail ; but in discussions about his art he is more direct and epigrammatic than elaborate or discursive.

"When I first thought of going on the stage," said Toole, "and long afterwards for that matter, I used to study every kind of acting, watch points of detail, incidents of business, not simply to imitate them but as lessons. There is a lot of talk about teaching acting ; but the only school is the theatre. If a would-be young actor wants to know what acting is, let him go and see the best that is to be seen ; let him see tragedy, comedy, farce, the best of its kind, and let him try and see

how effects are made, how certain speeches are spoken, what an actor does in a pathetic speech, what he does in a comic one. He will notice that one man makes his effects one way, one another. When the would-be actor gets home, let him try if he can do anything like what he has seen, or if he can do anything in the way of acting an entire scene of a play by himself; then let him try it on his friends; if he has any sense he will soon know whether he is a bore or likely to make anything of acting. Then, if he fancies himself, let him get into some company where he can play little parts, and study on the stage what he has studied off the stage, and see how things are worked behind the footlights; if there is anything in him he will get his chance by-and-by.

"Of course, he can't go into the country and join a stock company, as he could have done when I begun my career; that is a great drawback now, and it works very curiously; it leads to some young men thinking that if they can dress well and speak well they can act well; and it is not to be denied that in some cases they have succeeded in persuading managers that they really can. It is a serious thing for the perfection of dramatic art that young men obtain positions on the stage in modern comedy without the training necessary to make them masters of their profession.

"The great test of an actor's proficiency is Shakspeare. In the old days nobody ever thought he could do anything if he could not play Shakspeare, and I very much question if any man or woman really can interpret the passions, illustrate the joys and pleasures, the fun and frolic and mirth and sorrows of life with real success unless they can speak and act Shakspeare. That is why all actors of experience so deeply regret the abolition of stock companies, and why some of them have

dreams of a Government subsidy of a National Theatre. Our friend Irving has occasionally put this notion before the public, and more particularly for provincial cities; but it will never be carried out; in spite of the educational advancement of the age, there is almost as much cant against the stage as ever there was. The idea of any minister of the Queen attempting to subsidize theatres would almost lead to a revolution in some districts. Of course, it would be a good thing; it would keep the art intact, it would keep the lamp of dramatic literature burning, and it would hand onwards to posterity the true traditions of great acting.

"Now don't you think I have made something like a speech on acting? I couldn't have done it on my legs, to save my life; if I am very serious for five minutes I feel as if people were saying, 'What is the matter with Toole?' and I think preaching about anything is a bore; perhaps that's because I can't do it; and I am sure my London friends are like that. Now and then when I play some of my serious pieces, I know certain of my London audiences are saying to themselves, 'What is the matter with Johnny?' Not so in the country; not so in Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham; they like a bit of seriousness, not that their lives are more serious than ours in town, but things don't change so quickly in the great cities outside London as here; life is not so fast, and people seem to go to the theatres more in the old-fashioned spirit of our fathers—to be intellectually amused—than is the case in London; to have their feelings touched, to see the serious as well as the laughable side of life, and they seem to have more respect for the great authors and the great plays; not that I am complaining—don't think that; I am only referring to matters that strike me in looking back, and

at the same time observing the present ; and it is pleasant to have a serious chat upon such subjects.

“Now there is one thing which our French friends do, which I am glad to say our English actors don't. Monsieur Coquelin, with all his high-sounding views of art and dignity of the



MONS. COQUELIN.

actor, will take a private engagement to appear at an evening party and recite or act in a drawing-room, just as conjurors do, or regular entertainers. When the Comédie Française Company came over here, the members accepted these kind of engagements ; even the divine Sarah herself (and

a greater actress does not exist) attended receptions as a paid entertainer. It does not seem to me that this is keeping up the dignity of the theatre; it is not the English idea of dignity, anyhow. I met M. Coquelin at Aix. He was very talkative and polite, full of inquiries and criticism of Irving, had a lot to say about the principles of acting, and no doubt talked very well—it was good talk, even when it had gone through the sieve of translation; but he seems to forget that he is not a tragedian, neither in his intellectual gifts nor in his appearance. For ‘Hamlet’ and ‘Iago,’ for ‘Wolsey’ and ‘Mephistopheles,’ an actor wants something in the way of physique very different from the qualities which go to make a low comedian. Coquelin did not seem to realize this, and when he told me he was going to play ‘Mathias’ and ‘Mephistopheles’ in London and New York, I laughingly remarked that if he were successful in those parts, I should certainly play ‘Hamlet’ and ‘Macbeth.’ I suppose it was not quite polite to say this, but a low comedian is privileged. The truth is, I rather resent the patronizing way in which French actors presume to speak of the English stage. I have seen most of their great players, and I remember Phelps, Charles Mathews, Dillon, Keeley, Robson, Wright, Macready, Anderson, Webster, Buckstone, Compton, Sothern. I look into their past, and want to know where there is a crowd of better actors than these in the annals of the stage; and, in regard to the present, I recall many incidents of English acting that I don’t think were ever surpassed—in many cases I question if they have been equalled in France or any other country. But French actors, I believe, have the same more or less contemptuous feeling about the acting of other nations as they have in regard to the English stage; they

are ridiculously self-conscious in regard to French art, and particularly in regard to the stage. One of the most supremely happy men in this respect is certainly Monsieur Coquelin; nevertheless I maintain that the English histrionic record is quite equal, in some respects superior, to that of France, one of whose great dramatic authors, by the way, even goes the length of pooh-poohing Shakspeare! The American Donnelly dares to say that Shakspeare did not write his plays; but French jealousy goes a little further; for Sardou as good as says they were not worth writing. But to get back to what I was saying about remarkable instances of English acting in our own day, let me recall some of them. Take Edward Terry, he used to play 'Bumble' to my 'Artful Dodger' in *Oliver Twist*, when I first met him in Belfast; we all know of his gradual rise since then, and have enjoyed his unique fun and humour on the stage; I don't remember anything more artistic in its line than his burlesque song in one of the Gaiety pieces about the Bodega; the tune was an old Welsh air; his grotesque performance of 'The King of Toledo' in Byron's burlesque *The Pilgrim of Love*, at the Strand, could not have been surpassed, and as much may be said for many of his other quaint, dry characteristic performances.

"Then there are David James's 'Butterman' in *Our Boys*; his 'Boatman' in *The Guv'nor*—with its catching salutation, 'Your 'and, guv'nor, your and;' Thorne's 'Caleb Deecie,' and later his 'Parson Adams'—true, quaint and natural. What could have been finer in its way, or a more truthful impersonation than Warner's 'Coupeau' in *Drink*; what more terribly realistic than his death-scene? Then poor Clayton's finished and romantic performance in *All for Her*; what a contrast to his acting as the 'Dean' in *Dandy Dick*! I never

saw him in *Great Expectations*, but it was in this piece that he made his first marked impression upon critical London. I do not expect to see anything better than his performances in the three plays I have mentioned, all so different, each showing such remarkable versatility.

"Beerbohm Tree is comparatively a new actor ; his 'Curate' in *The Private Secretary* and his



MR. JOHN CLAYTON IN "ALL FOR HER."

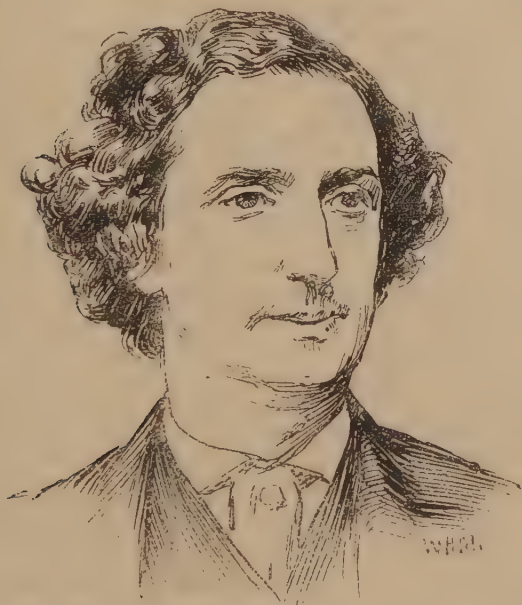
French conspirator in *Called Back*, great contrasts, were both rare examples of a remarkable talent, and could not, I think, be outmatched. I shall always remember Terriss in the part of the young hero in *Louis the Eleventh* as quite up to the demands of that character, especially for the way in which he wore his armour—no easy thing to do—his brave and gallant bearing, and his great scene with Irving, where he attacks the king in

the bedchamber. A breezy actor of sailors and melodramatic heroes demanded by modern Adelphi audiences—not the kind of melodrama we admired twenty years ago, but first-rate no doubt of its class—and I don't know a more free-and-easy dashing here than Terriss as the virtuous young handsome rescuer of betrayed innocence. Willard now is an actor of another stamp, a young man of experience trained in the last days of provincial stock companies. Could the French stage give us a more perfect bit of work than that of the 'Spider' in *The Silver King*, or a more masterly impersonation of its kind than Willard's performance in *Arkwright's Wife*? Mr. H. Kemble is another notable comedian and character-actor of a rare humour. He reminds me of Keeley. He had a long turn in the provinces when Willard and Leonard Boyne were serving their apprenticeships, and, as I said before, at the fag-end of the system of stock companies.

“Kemble's impersonation of a gay, impecunious yeomanry officer in Coghlan's *Enemies* was a study that in itself told the whole story of its provincial surroundings; and in the same play there was a scene between Fernandez and Coghlan that no one who saw it will ever forget for its intense reality. Coghlan's over-trained athlete in *Man and Wife* is becoming a stage memory, even in the actor's lifetime, and before he has ceased to play youthful stage heroes. But talking of theatrical memories, Walter Lacy as 'Don Saluste' in *Ruy Blas* was a superb performance, sharing all the honours with the hero of the romance, played by Fechter.

“Could anything be more admirable than the 'Carker' of Fernandez in *Dombey and Son*? And what a reciter he is!—which, by the way, reminds me of the clean-cut, well-finished work of

Mrs. Billington, who has so much power and so much tenderness. Giddens has a gift of his own in this way; his 'American Dutchmen' are inimitable. One might fill a chapter with examples of the current work of our best actors in merely giving instances of memorable scenes in notable plays. Charles Wyndham's 'Rover' in *Wild Oats* is a delightful bit of light comedy, and Ger-



MR. GEORGE HONEY.

many and Russia have endorsed his 'David Garrick' with Imperial approval. Henry Neville's 'Clancarthy' and his 'Ticket-of-Leave Man' are fine contrasts of study—a clever actor Neville, in the romantic Don Cæsar de Bazan class of character. Brough in 'Tony Lumpkin' and other comedy parts is first-rate. I thought Marius's 'Jim the Penman' a remarkable piece of acting,

especially for an artist who is associated more with burlesque than with serious drama.

“Wilson Barrett¹ in *The Silver King* and *Ben-*

¹ Mr. J. S. Wood sends the chronicler the following capital story, the facts of which have been endorsed in a kindly letter from Mr. Barrett, and acknowledged with a hearty laugh by Mr. Toole.

“It happened at ‘Ye Olde Englishe Fayre,’ which I organized in ’81 at the Albert Hall, and I was reminded of the story only recently by Mr. Wilson Barrett, who, with Mr. Toole, were the chief actors in this little comedy. W. B. was to play in *The Clerical Error*, in the West Theatre, and was dressed before time, and stood by the door on the corridor floor, which is always very dark. J. L. T. approaches—he also was to do something—along the bewildering corridor, and seeing a clerical gentleman standing in the shadow of the door, asked, ‘if that was the best way to the West Theatre,’ when a conversation something like this occurred: ‘Theatre, sir?’ says Barrett, recognizing Toole, and disguising his own voice. ‘Yes, sir,’ responds Toole. ‘I believe there is a theatre somewhere here, may I venture to inquire the name of the gentleman whom I am addressing.’ ‘My name is Toole,’ says the comedian. ‘What, Toole the play-actor,’ asked Barrett, with an expression of pained surprise. ‘Yes, J. L. Toole,’ is the reply, ‘why do you ask?’ ‘And you are Toole, the comedian!’ exclaims Barrett, half turning away. ‘Is Toole the comedian such a horrible person?’ responds Toole warmly. ‘He may not be; but the so-called profession to which he belongs is a dreadful one.’ ‘Dreadful!’ exclaims Toole, ‘dreadful, why dreadful?’ ‘The theatre, sir, is an immoral thing; it always has been; I fear it always must be; oh, my dear friend, be warned in time. Leave it while you may yet find the better path!’ ‘Leave it!’ exclaims Toole, ‘I don’t know who you are, but you must allow me to say you are a very bigoted, not to say impertinent person.’ ‘Parson, sir!’ exclaimed Barrett, ‘that is the character I am assuming at the moment.’ ‘Then you are assuming it in a very offensive manner, sir, and I am sorry to seem rude in making that remark; I have known and do know many of your cloth, and have invariably found them men of charity and benevolence, and—’ ‘That will do Johnny, old friend,’ says Barrett, in his own voice; ‘I have made a clerical error, evidently; you had better get on; you’ll miss your cue; they have called you, I believe, ever so long since.’ ‘Oh, you vagabond!’ exclaims Toole, as he shakes his fellow-actor’s hand and

my-Cree stands upon a high platform, and his 'Chatterton' had in it a special tenderness and charm. Mrs. Bancroft's 'Polly Eccles' and her scene with Coghlan in the second act of *Sweethearts* would be hard to beat on any stage. Mrs. John Wood and Arthur Cecil in *The Milliner's Bill* is a bit of stage fun I have not seen excelled in Paris or New York. Was anything ever more



MISS KATE PHILLIPS.

droll than Mrs. Wood's 'Pocahontas,' except her singing of Burnand's droll ditty, 'His Heart was True to Poll'? Poor George Honey's 'Eccles' in *Caste*, and his 'Graves' in *Money* were the perfection of stage art. Edouin's acting in *Turned Up* is a very funny and interesting bit of low

hurries in the direction pointed out to him—not to perdition but to act for a charity, an occupation which many artists find congenial and with the result of advancing the interests of many a good cause."

comedy. Mrs. Kendal has no rival in domestic comedy. In her own line she is as supreme as Miss Terry is in hers, and both are artists worthy of any period and any country. Mrs. Kendal's 'Pauline,' and 'Miss Hardcastle,' and her 'Dora' in *Diplomacy* are superb impersonations; while upon the still higher platform of Shaksperian art, Miss Terry's 'Desdemona,' 'Ophelia,' and 'Beatrice' cannot be surpassed, and I doubt if they have ever been equalled. Bancroft in *Caste* was a very distinguished figure, and his performance of 'Tom Stylus' in *Society* is fine comedy acting. I need only mention Irving's 'Louis XI.,' 'Charles I.,' 'Shylock,' 'Mathias,' 'Hamlet.'

"When one recalls these actors and scenes, not alone from the past, but chiefly in the present, one is inclined to smile at the notion that we are short of actors, that we are eclipsed by the French stage. And yet I have not mentioned Penley, Arthur Roberts, Blakely, Alexander, Arthur Williams, Brookfield, Alfred Bishop, Miss Emery, the two Miss Rorkes, Harry Nicholls, Miss Fanny Brough, Mr. Yorke Stephens, and others; and I suppose I am not entitled to count in Mary Anderson, who belongs to America, and yet she seems more and more to belong to us. Nor ought I, perhaps, to mention my own company, but Shelton, as the old lord in *The Butler*; Ward as the hermit in *Paw Claudian*; Miss Thorne, as the buxom 'Lady Bootleton'; Miss Johnstone as 'Tilly Slowboy'; Miss Lyndon, in *Stage Dora*; Miss Phillips, in *The Don*; and Billington, in *Dot*, are quite worthy of the best traditions of the stage. The French companies we have seen of late in London can certainly teach us nothing; while, I maintain, that we could teach them many things, not only in regard to the exhibition of the variety of the human passions, but in regard to the pro-

duction of plays. The best of these miscellaneous companies have the same set of actions as if they had all learnt deportment, fencing, and the rest from the same master. Sarah Bernhardt is the only French player I have ever seen who did not literally come down to the footlights and talk to the audience. Even Monsieur Coquelin has this bad habit, and his expressed views of the 'Burgomaster' in *The Bells* show in him a wonderful lack of that imagination which is considered necessary for the interpretation of characters under the influence of either intense feeling or morbid fancy. But I am, I fear, entering upon the office of the critic; and, after all, the French way may be the best for the French audiences—they are different from us, have different views of life, look at the stage from a different standpoint, and may be all right in their way; but if I concede this to them I want the same consideration for us, if not only from themselves, at least from English playgoers and critics. Monsieur Sardou says *Hamlet* is rubbish, a poor play and badly constructed, and that Shakspeare is not a good dramatist. Monsieur Coquelin maintains that the fear-haunted 'Mathias'—who under the influence of the mountebank offering to unmask his secret thoughts, he being a murderer, goes home, makes provision against his possible death, and dies of fright of the mesmerist—does not require to be played except as a common ignorant person, and that it is not necessary to suggest anything weird and strange to the audience in the sound of bells by which he is haunted. It seems to me that, in this view of the story of *The Bells*, M. Coquelin is just as wrong as M. Sardou is about *Hamlet* and Shakspeare. So far as Sardou is concerned, and in saying this I have only admiration for his great powers as a dramatist, he is as silly and inconsequential about

Shakspeare as a certain lecturer was in his reply to a juvenile member of his audience as related by Edmund Yates. "Many years ago, one hot summer evening," says my old friend, "I turned into the pit of the Strand Theatre, where were exhibiting a party of Bosjesmen, stunted savages from Africa. I paid sixpence for admission, the price being a shilling to the boxes, and threepence to the gallery. The wretched little beings had gone through a portion of their performance, war-dances, imitation of deer-tracking and shooting, &c., when their showman, a tall, swaggering person in evening dress, with his hair elaborately parted down the middle, advanced to the footlights to give us some particulars about them. 'The little man,' he announced in very mellifluous tones, 'the little man is forty-two years old!' He paused an instant, and a boy in the threepenny gallery called out shrilly, 'And 'ow old are *you*?' There was a laugh, and the showman was disconcerted for a moment. Then, laying his hand on his shirt-front, and breathing hard, he looked up at his little querist and said with much dignity, 'Old enough, sir, to tell you that you are—no gentleman!'"

VI.

"APROPPOS of French acting and actors," continued Toole, when he had done chuckling over the Bosjesmen's entertainment, "one might mention, as a pleasant incident, Irving's supper to Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and also the fact that the leading French critics have acknowledged the high excellence of his art. Many of Irving's entertainments in the Beefsteak Club Room are historical, and you have, no doubt, made a note of some of them. None was, however, I think more interesting than the supper he gave to

Madame Sarah Bernhardt, on her leaving London for some wonderful tour in Mexico or Africa, or somewhere at the other ends of the earth. It was a distinguished little company, you remember, of ladies and gentlemen, and the divine Sarah came direct from the stage of Her Majesty's after a very arduous performance. What I am more particularly thinking about was the incident of Irving describing to us Clint's picture of the great Kean scene in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*—you drew my attention to the singular likeness there was in the upper part of the heads of Kean, Irving, and Bernhardt. Irving acting as showman to Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt, before the picture of Edmund Kean as 'Sir Giles Overreach,' would make a fine historical picture. What a graceful little speech Irving made, in proposing Sarah Bernhardt's health!"

"And what a happy speech you made," I replied, "in giving the toast of 'our leading English actress, Ellen Terry,' whose 'Margaret,' 'Ophelia,' and 'Olivia,' you mentioned as being 'poetic as they are womanly!' It was indeed an interesting occasion."

"And what a prince Irving is in making these occasions! I am very glad to hear that he had an exceptional experience on a recent visit to Paris. Some of the leading men of the theatres received him most kindly, and also with distinction. This is as it should be. Our French friends honour their calling when they honour Irving, and a little reciprocity in the way of professional courtesy is delightful!"

"I have several times played with Irving for benefits, once or twice at his own theatre. Once we did *Robert Macaire*. We rollicked through it. It was as much fun to us as I hope it

was to the audience. I was 'Jacques Strop.' Well, you know what a couple of exaggerated impecunious ruffians we looked. I could not help thinking how incongruous a certain conversation which we had would have seemed to an outsider. It was a question of making up the amount of the sum for the fund of which we were playing to a thousand pounds. It was at the close of the piece—a hurried little chat. 'About a hundred and fifty



MR. TOOLE AS "JACQUES STROP."

pounds short of a thousand,' said Robert Macaire, 'I think we ought to make it up a thousand.' 'By all means,' said Jacques Strop, who had only a minute or two before sneaked off in custody. 'I'll give so much,' said Robert. 'And I'll give so much, too,' I said; and then it seemed as if we were practising a duet which Grossmith wrote for me, 'I was a sailor as a boy; and I was a sailor too!' I couldn't help roaring with laughter at the notion struck me. 'What is it?' said

Robert Macaire, this time very much like Irving. 'Nothing, it's all right,' I said. And we made it a thousand pounds, we two ragamuffins, and it was delightful to hear the round upon round of applause when the sum to be handed over to the fund in question was mentioned to the house."

XVI.

"THE BEST OF FRIENDS MUST PART."

Management—The Folly—New plays—Toole's Theatre—Between then and now—Dramatic authors and their methods—Byron, Burnand, Pinero, Merivale—Taverns and clubs—The Garrick and the Green-room—The Prince of Wales and how he kept a secret—Reminiscences of Sandringham—Meeting the Queen at Invercauld—The late Prince Imperial—Some anecdotes of Byron—Parting words.

I.

"WE have been chatting for the past two hours about everything and everybody," I said, "and we have not yet picked up the thread of our story from the point of your return from America."

"Then let us return, as you novelists say, to the period where we left our hero, on his triumphant home-coming from the vast continent of America, eh?"

With the aid of memoranda of my own, including a date or two, and one of Mr. Lowne's scrap-books, my host gave me the following particulars of his work, bringing our joint labours down to the present time:—

"On my return from America I went on tour in the provinces before I came back to town. But

you must let me digress a moment. The notes you have given me suggest points I must not forget.

"Every foot of ground in London, more particularly about Charing Cross, may be called both sacred and historic. But we will not go back to that, eh? It might be thought too learned for a comedian to rake up the history of Charing Cross.

"I found myself wandering into a very distant time the other night, when I was thinking about the questions you asked me concerning the Folly Theatre. I had visions of the Cross of Charing, and all the gay and warlike doings that belong to its early history. Our friend Irving could put those wonderful scenes upon his stage, and he has plenty of warrant in Shakspeare; but we must be content with more modern work. What made me begin to think of historic and sacred ground was the fact that only comparatively a few years ago the site of this theatre was occupied by a Roman Catholic oratory, where two popular fathers attracted goodly audiences—I mean congregations. I do not know why they disappeared or how, but upon the foundations of the oratory arose the Polygraphic Hall, which afterwards became known as the Charing Cross Theatre, at which Woodin gave his various performances. Some alterations and improvements were afterwards made, and it became the Folly Theatre, which eventually came into my hands.

"Some people were inclined to christen it 'Toole's Folly.' They thought a popular actor who could always get a good starring engagement with or without his own company, was not quite wise in entering upon management on his own account. But I felt the time had come when I ought to have a house of my own; and it was

not, after all, a very daring stroke of ambition to take the Folly Theatre. So when I returned from America, after making a short but very successful provincial tour, I settled down at the Folly a full-blown London manager. I had the little theatre re-decorated, made the most of its resources, and opened very prosperously with Byron's capital farcical comedy, *A Fool and His Money*, followed by *Ici on Parle Français*.

"This was in 1879. I had originally produced, as previously mentioned, *A Fool and His Money*, at the Globe Theatre, nearly two years previously. The revival went admirably, and in the livery of 'Chawles,' responding to very loud applause and calls for a speech, I thanked my very genial audience, told them I was not in a position to make an eloquent speech, that I had been too busy to think one out, but ventured to say there was no knowing what might occur in the course of the season. At the same time I promised them a new comedy by Mr. Byron, whose name was received with a genuine burst of hearty applause. After I had said these few words there was a call for Byron, who came forward and received quite an ovation. So you see my managerial reign began pleasantly, and I do not think it has ever justified the cynical suggestion that the Charing Cross venture might be called 'Toole's Folly.' The Press was exceedingly kind: my welcome home from America was as hearty in the newspapers as it was in the theatre.

"During an illness that followed, and a sad domestic affliction, Byron came to my assistance with a revival of *Not Such a Fool as He Looks; or, Sir Simon Simple*, playing the leading part himself, and having excellent support from my company, Mr. Westland taking my part of 'Spriggins' in the after-piece.

" *Married in Haste* and *Cyril's Success* were also revived; and I returned in the first week of February, played *Paul Pry*, *Domestic Economy*, and *A Fool and His Money*, and on the last night in March, 1880, produced *The Upper Crust*, by Byron, with Billington as 'Lord Hesketh,' Mr. E. W. Garden as 'Sir Robert Boobleton, Bart.,' Mr. E. D. Ward as 'Walter Wrentmore,' Mr. T. Sidney as 'Tibworth,' Miss Lilian Cavallier as 'Norah Doublechick,' Miss Rowland Phillips as 'Kate Venmore,' Miss Emily Thorn as 'Lady Boobleton,' and myself as 'Mr. Barnaby Doublechick,' proprietor of Doublechick's Diaphanous Soap. I do not think Byron was ever happier in his dialogue, which was both sparkling and humorous, while his sketches of 'Doublechick' and 'Boobleton' were quite in his most humorous vein. The comedy was a great success: it had a long run.

" In the summer season we added to the programme a pretty little comedy by Mr. A. W. Pinero, called *Hester's Mystery*. This was one of the first pieces from Mr. Pinero's delightful pen. The first thing, I believe, he ever did was *The Money-spinner*, produced in the country, and purchased there by Mr. Kendal. Pinero, who was a member of the Lyceum company, was introduced to me as a dramatist by Irving.

" In the autumn of that year I gave a few matinées, reviving *Dot*, and introducing later Mr. Byron's *The Light Fantastic*, which went so well that I transferred it to the evening bill. I played a dancing-master, called 'Professor Slithery.' The piece was very farcical, and went with roars of laughter.

" *The Upper Crust* went merrily along into the next year, when I changed the after-piece from *The Light Fantastic* to Robert Reece's *Wizard*

of the Wilderness, originally played at the Gaiety in March, 1873. I was 'Didymus Dexter,' a conjuring chemist, and introduced some sleight-of-hand tricks, for which purpose I took lessons of a professional magician, who was very much bothered now and then, when sitting in front, at my occasional forgetfulness or inefficiency, more particularly that when I spoiled a trick I 'guyed' it and made fun of it.

"In June, 1881, when *The Upper Crust* had run over four hundred nights, I produced Mr. Burnand's *Artful Cards*, which had been very successful during my Gaiety engagement, and I ran it during alternate nights with *The Upper Crust*, following it by a comedy by Mrs. Fairbairn, called *Waiting Consent*, in which Mr. Elmore, Mr. Ward, Mr. Shelton, and Miss Rowland Phillips appeared.

"In the middle of July I gave two farewell performances prior to closing my initial season of management, taking a rest, and arranging for my provincial tour. On Friday evening, July 22nd, 1881, the programme opened with *Hester's Mystery*, followed by *The Pretty Horsebreaker*, a scene from *The Wife*, the sketch of *Trying a Magistrate*, a new farce by Sydney Grundy, called *Over the Garden Wall*, the whole concluding with the so-called diverting absurdity, entitled *Welsh Rabbits*. Miss Fanny Josephs and Mr. Billington appeared with me in *The Pretty Horsebreaker*, and Mr. John McCulloch, the well-known American tragedian, and Mr. James Fernandez appeared in *The Wife*.

"Called upon for a few words, I mentioned that the season had lasted twenty-one months, and had been so very successful that I had been induced to take the Folly on a long lease, and intended to make the house very comfortable for my reappear-

ance in December. I thanked my fellow-artists who had assisted me ; and, *à propos* of the assistance of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry for the following morning, I expressed a hope that I should return the compliment to the Lyceum Manager by playing for his benefit the next evening in the farce called *The Birthplace of Podgers*, which was first represented at the Lyceum twenty-three years previously, when that house was managed by the



MR. TOOLE AS "TOM CRANKEY" IN "THE BIRTHPLACE OF PODGERS."

late Mr. Charles Dillon. I mentioned the story we have told in a previous chapter, that *The Birthplace of Podgers* was introduced to me by Mr. Edmund Yates, with the declaration that the author, Mr. John Hollingshead, would never leave me until the farce was produced. That author never did leave me, as you know, until that event occurred ; and I was then residing, as I told the audience, in a house which was afterwards pulled down to make way for the Strand Music Hall,

subsequently converted into the Gaiety Theatre under the auspices of Mr. Hollingshead, who had followed me up with such good and friendly results. 'Friend John' little thought, as a hard-working journalist in those days, that he would come to be manager and chief proprietor of a popular theatre built on the site of the room where we discussed *The Birthplace of Podgers*.

"On the next evening my farewell programme included *The Hunchback*, with Ellen Terry as 'Helen,' and Henry Irving as 'Modus.' Mr. Arthur Sketchley gave his *Experiences of Mrs. Brown at the Play*; we also did *Domestic Economy*; and Mr. Grundy's little farce of *Over the Garden Wall* went with roars of laughter. In that I was 'Mr. Folgate,' my mind and peace disturbed by the cat of my next-door neighbour, 'Mr. Bartholomew Close.' I determined to take the life of my feline foe, but, instead of shooting the cat, knocked over the gardener, out of which a good many ridiculous complications arose."

II.

"I RETURNED to Charing Cross in December, the alterations in the theatre occupying more time than I had anticipated, and costing me, one way and another, upwards of ten thousand pounds. I decided to call the house 'Toole's Theatre,' and re-opened it under that title on the 16th February, 1882. The house was much enlarged, very prettily decorated, boasted a handsome saloon, staircase, and *foyer*, a fine hall, and was altogether, as it is to-day, a very charming, pretty little house. The newspaper descriptions of the artistic character of its decorations were elaborate, and, to me, most interesting. I confess I was a little surprised to find that my decorations were Raphaelesque, that my new ceiling was in the Rénaissance style, my

saloon Pompeian ; but altogether I was very delighted with everything and everybody about the place, and shall not in a hurry forget the hearty reception which a crowded audience gave me on my return in February, 1882.

“ I opened the new house, ‘ Toole’s,’ with *Paul Pry* and *Domestic Economy*, and on the fall of the curtain, being called upon for a speech, I made one, and am enabled to give it to you, if not quite verbatim, quite near enough. The newspapers, in reporting speeches, know how to separate the wheat from the chaff, and this is one of the few examples of their skill in this respect that I have by me :—

“ ‘ It was expected,’ he said, ‘ that he should have a “ few words ” with the audience ; but that had a very alarming sound, as though he and they were going to quarrel, a thing which they had never done, and which he hoped they never would do. (Cheers and laughter.) He was much obliged to them for coming to visit him in his new home, and he was glad to see them all looking so well. (Laughter.) He protested that he thought they looked better than they would at any other theatre —(laughter)—and the oftener they came there the better they would continue to look. (Laughter.) It was to be hoped that they would appreciate the disinterested spirit in which he made these remarks. (Laughter.) His time had been so fully occupied that he had not had leisure to prepare a speech, but he trusted they would give him credit for all the pretty things he ought to say, Above all, he hoped that they liked the theatre. (Cheers.) If anybody had any complaint—he did not mean indisposition—he requested that a line might be dropped to him, and the grievance should be rectified. (Cheers.) The theatre had its ‘ exits and its entrances,’ as Shakespeare would say, and

many of them ; and not only had ample provision been made against fire, but a verandah had been erected in front to protect them from water as well. (Laughter.) In the course of the evening he had received many telegrams from friends—Mr. Irving, Mr. Byron, and Mr. Sims Reeves in the number—wishing him success, and he was gratefully sensible of the kindness he had experienced from all quarters. In conclusion, he again thanked the audience for their hearty reception, and expressed a hope that the friendly relations which had always existed between him and the public would remain unclouded to the last.' "

III.

"I WOULD like to mention my indebtedness to my friend Mr. J. C. Parkinson for his practical and sympathetic advice in connection with the lesseeship, re-construction, and re-naming of the Folly Theatre, to me a very important enterprise. It is a great privilege, in one's serious undertakings, to have the clear-headed and disinterested counsel of such a friend as Parkinson.

"The Folly was a poor little house, but it had possibilities, and to-day it is one of the prettiest theatres, and " (with a laugh) "one of the pleasantest theatres I have ever played in. How one gets to like what belongs to oneself ! I kept together my stock company, which is one of the few stock companies now existing ; I mean by that, the members of it are not merely engaged for the run of a piece, but are with me all the year round. I have to make occasional changes, of course ; but Billington, Miss Lyndon, Miss Johnstone, Mr. Shelton, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Westland, Mr. Ward, Miss Thorne, and Mr. Lowne have been my companions, some of

them for many years ; Ward has left me for America, Gardner has gone to the Adelphi, Mr. Cortly, and Miss Phillips are new comers ; but what I wanted to point out is that my company is formed and maintained on the old stock principle, and they have had parts written for



MR. JOHN BILLINGTON.

them by Byron, Burnand, Merivale, Pinero, and other authors, in several of my best original comedies.

“ I find it pleasant to see the same faces year after year, and most valuable to be working with the same artists. There can hardly be a happier family than we are, myself and company, always

on excellent terms on and off the stage, in business ever anxious to do our best with any piece in which we are engaged. The principal works I had played up to this time were written by Byron. Poor fellow, he had most endearing qualities, and a wonderful fund of humour; his fun was always genial, never coarse, never cruel, he was more than a wit, he was a true humorist; and this can also be said of Burnand, and what a delightful thing is humour without a sting; wit rarely, I think, is without it, I mean wit by itself. There is point enough in the humour of Burnand and Byron, and both men have their sparkle and their pungency, a trifle of bitter, and as Spriggins would say, a *soupeçon* of acid; but neither their wit nor their humour ever leaves a wound behind, while their laughter is hearty and thoroughly honest."

IV.

"THE most notable event of this first season of the newly-named house in King William Street was the production of a three-act play by Byron, entitled *Auntie*. It began with rather a bad omen: a portion of the scenery took fire in the first act. There was a little scare for a few minutes, but Ward, Billington, and myself reassured the audience: a fireman opened the extra door in the pit, and while the stage carpenters were putting out the little conflagration, which was seen at once to be only a small affair, I walked down to the footlights and assured the house that there were eight or nine fire-engines and eighty or ninety firemen in constant readiness for incidents of this kind, and begged they would not be alarmed, but wait and enjoy Mr. Byron's play, into which it had not been intended to introduce anything alarming. *Auntie* was not one of Byron's most

successful efforts, but it had a prosperous little run.

"At the close of the season I made another provincial tour, letting the theatre for the summer and early autumn season to Miss Fanny Davenport; and, returning from the provinces in October re-opened with *The Upper Crust*, and *Guffin's Elopement*, by Mr. Arthur Law and Mr. George



MR. TOOLE IN "STAGE DORA."

Grossmith, sang 'The Speaker's Eye,' and produced Pinero's *Girls and Boys*, a clever English comedy, full of original thoughts and suggestions, about which great interest was felt, more particularly as it followed *The Squire*, at the St. James's, which had caused considerable controversy. *Girls and Boys* was either too clever or not clever enough, but it did not succeed in

pleasing the public, and in the spring I revived *Uncle Dick's Darling*, with Billington as 'Chevenix' and Miss Florence West as 'Mary Belton,' in which this young lady made a promising first appearance on the regular stage.

"I followed *Uncle Dick* with *Artful Cards*, and on the 27th May produced Burnand's admirable burlesque of *Fedora*, in which Miss Marie Linden quite took the town in her successful imitation of Sarah Bernhardt. Oddly enough she had not seen the great French actress, but had studied her through the performance of Mrs. Bernard Beere, making-up, however, from photographs of the original French heroine. The burlesque hit the public at once, and was pronounced by the critics to be one of the cleverest and most mirthful of Burnand's many lively productions.

"This year I let the theatre during my provincial tours to Mr. T. W. Robertson, who produced with good success a round of the Robertsonian comedies.

"Early in 1884, Mr. Burnand followed up his success with *Fedora* by a genial travesty of Mr. Wilson Barrett's very successful production of *Claudian*. The piece was called *Paw Clawdian*, Miss Marie Linden being as successful in her imitation of Miss Eastlake as she had been previously in regard to Sarah Bernhardt, Mr. E. D. Ward making a hit as a burlesque Wilson Barrett in the part of the Hermit.

"We are now getting too near the present time, which is making its own history in the very presence of the reader, to go into minute details about one's other work. Between the production of *Paw Clawdian* and to-day I have gone on the same round of new productions, provincial tours, and attacks of the gout, the latter introducing me to Aix, and giving me evidence of much kindly

feeling on the part of the public, and touching proofs of many old and true friendships. The leading incidents of 'Toole's' in these days are the production of *Going It*, by the veteran playwright, Mr. Madison Morton; a burlesque of the Lyceum *Faust*, by Burnand; *The Butler*, by Mr. and Mrs. Herman Merivale; and *The Don*, by the same



MR. TOOLE AS "THE BUTLER."

authors. These two plays have taken a foremost place among my most successful pieces, and *The Don* has had an exceptional recognition in the two great University cities.¹ When I went to play

¹ "Mr. Toole has reason to be proud of himself as the Dean of Chapels in *The Don*. The two University towns and cities have endorsed the verdict of London. They may be said to have conferred honorary degrees on *The Don*. Cambridge

the piece at Oxford a little party of real Dons invited me to luncheon, and I need not tell you how complimentary they were to me and to the profession to which I belong, for you were present, and I am sure the reader will believe me when I say that in all the flattering recognition I have received from distinguished men and famous audiences I feel grateful, not simply for myself alone, but for the profession at large, a profession of which I feel very proud, and a profession which, rightly understood, is one of great public usefulness, not only as a matter of entertainment, but as a factor in the public work of national education."

V.

"COMING back for a moment to authors, I recall with much delight remembrances of the pleasant intercourse I have had with many of them, more especially with those who have written for me. Poor Byron! the day he was buried I played 'Chawles' at the Crystal Palace; I could not

having received the comedy with unanimous favour; at Oxford, on Thursday, the new theatre was crowded with a fashionable audience. Many heads of colleges, professors, undergraduates, pretty women, and well-known citizens were present; and every point that more especially illustrated college life, or made honest fun of it during Commemoration time, met with ripples of laughter, which occasionally broke out into rounds of applause. It says much for the broad liberality of modern Oxford when the players are so well received, and that even the classic gown and almost sacred cap may be used without giving offence, the comedy being wholesome, and of good, honest humour. There are still managers and playwrights who think the public like what they call 'a little spice' in stage merriment; but the best plays and the most popular are those to which Paterfamilias can take his family, and *The Don* is one of those honest, genial pieces. Mr. Toole throughout his career has never given his audiences the smallest cause of offence in regard to what he has put upon the stage, or how he has put it on, and one cannot but rejoice at his continued success."—*Sunday Times*, June 10th, 1888.

help it, one is obliged to keep one's engagements ; but I felt very sad. It seemed to me once or twice as if I could hear the funeral service while I was speaking the dear fellow's merry lines. Byron wrote for me *The Upper Crust*, *A Fool and His Money*, *Auntie*, *The Light Fantastic*, *Uncle Dick's Darling*, and *Tottles*. Burnand has fitted me, as they call it, with *Paw Claudian*, *Stage Dora*, and *Artful Cards*, and I think the two first mentioned are among the cleverest of his many humorous burlesques.

"While Byron and Burnand had many points in common, and are more or less akin in their work, their stage management was very opposite. Byron used to take things very easy ; would make a suggestion, or drop a hint, and then disappear, glide away, so to speak. On the other hand, Burnand will work up his scenes at rehearsal in the most wonderful way ; follow up an idea, or jump at a new suggestion, and stick to it persistently until he has developed it into the shape it has taken in his mind. Pinero is very patient and careful in the stage-managing of his plays ; his *Girls and Boys* seemed to me to be an admirable play ; but it did not run for some reason or other. It was capitally staged by Pinero, whose *Hester's Mystery* is one of my best little stock pieces ; although one of the first things he ever wrote, it showed his delicate and artistic method, and I think the public is fortunate in having such a writer among its servants. In these days, when there is supposed to be a prurient tendency in public taste, which, however, I am inclined to deny, it is very satisfactory to be able to point to the successes of Burnand and Byron in the realm of comedy and burlesque, and of Pinero and Merivale as playwrights who have contributed to the stage farcical

comedy, as well as comedy and drama of the highest class.

"I have not for many years played any character that has given me more personal pleasure as an actor than *The Don*. In *The Butler* and *The Don* I have had valuable assistance from one of the newest members of my company, Miss Phillips. In regard to the method of dramatists, it is worth mentioning, perhaps, that Byron rarely had to cut his manuscript; he worked it into the right proportions as to length before the theatre ever saw it; but Merivale is very fertile as an author. He elaborates immensely. In one of his pieces there always seems to me at the outset to be enough matter for two. It was a great surprise to me to discover that a dramatist of so poetic a turn of mind as Merivale should have in him so much real fun as is shown in both *The Butler* and *The Don*."

VI.

"WHEN we were talking of actors and acting just now, I meant to say something about clubs; it is quite *à propos*."

"I am all attention," I said.

"The young actor of the present day," continued Toole, "has many pleasant social advantages not to be had in my early days. I count most prominently among these the modern club. I don't of course mean the Garrick, because it is not only necessary that a man should belong to the profession to be an acceptable member of the Garrick, but he must have made his mark, not only before the public, but among his professional friends. The Garrick, therefore, gives an actor a sort of endorsement of character and ability, a kind of diploma, as it were. But there are on the way up to the Garrick various minor clubs,

where men can meet each other in a pleasant way, not only for social purposes, but to talk and chat and exchange notes and opinions about their art. In my early days the tavern was almost the only place where actors could meet, and there they were not always able to select their company. In these days there are many artistic clubs where actors meet authors, journalists, artists, and others who are in sympathy with the stage, many of them, as dramatic authors, connected with it; and this kind of meeting has, I venture to think, a far more elevating effect upon the status and ambition of the actor than the old tavern days when I was a boy. The Green-room, I suppose, is more particularly the actor's club to-day. There are, of course, the Savage, the Arundel, the Whitefriars, and other clubs where actors are welcome, and in connection with which one has pleasant memories, but the Green-room seems to me to be particularly an actors' club, and it is very pleasant, after a night's work, to meet the men of one's own craft over a glass of wine or a hand at whist. The Garrick entered upon quite a new phase of social life a few years ago, when we arranged the Saturday night suppers to which members can invite their friends, members and guests supping together in common. We hear a great deal about the brilliant days of the Garrick, the rare smoking-room chat when Jerrold, Thackeray, and others were members; but I don't think they could have had much pleasanter times than we have at the Garrick now. They certainly had not the number of guests and members sitting down together that we have on Saturday nights. One may not, I conclude, describe any of these club gatherings; but some of them will make history. I don't know whether there are diarists among us who make notes of Garrick evenings for future reminis-

cences; but I shouldn't wonder that a hundred years hence, if we could revisit the glimpses of the moon, some of us will be much more celebrated in biographies, reminiscences, diaries, and in other historical works, than we are now."

VII.

"You said the other day that I ought to say something about the Prince of Wales. I wish we might both think it in good taste to say all I feel about him, not only as a prince, not only as the heir to the throne, but as a man and a patron of art. No prince has ever shown so much delicate, manly, kindly consideration for the members of my profession, and, from all I hear in the country and in town, he is just as popular with the other professions. In the country it is delightful to hear men who hunt and shoot, and carry on the sporting traditions of England, talk of the Prince, not only as a host, but as a guest; not only as a shot, but as a fearless rider across country. Of course, it would not become me to say more than this. One cannot praise a prince—one leaves mere courtiers to do that—but if I am taken to the Tower and beheaded for undue familiarity, I cannot help saying that I think him, apart from his Royal status, a really excellent gentleman, a pleasant companion, and a most delightful host. He has a keen sense of fun. When first he asked me to go down to Sandringham and act, he wanted to make the occasion a surprise for the Princess and his friends. Loveday had to go down and make certain preliminary arrangements. The Prince explained that he wished him to keep his business at Sandringham a close secret, 'and,' his Royal Highness added, 'to enable you to do so I shall introduce you as the Spanish Ambassador!' 'Oh, but I cannot speak Spanish, sir!'

said Loveday. 'Nor can they,' said the Prince, laughing; 'so your disguise will be perfect.'

"We played in a fit-up in the Bowling Alley, the programme being *Our Clerks*, *The Steeplechase*, and *Ici on parle Français*. At the close of the performance we supped together in the dining-hall, and after supper our Royal host and his brothers, Prince Leopold and the Duke of



THE PRINCE AND THE "SPANISH AMBASSADOR."

Connaught, joined us, with several of the Prince's guests. The Prince proposed my health in a very genial and kindly speech, and we spent a most agreeable time.

"I have played with my company three times at Sandringham. On the second occasion the stage was erected in the ball-room, a lovely apartment; we had a proper proscenium, and everything in order. The occasion was the twenty-first

birthday of Prince Victor. We played *Paul Pry*, *Guffin's Elopement*, and I sang 'The Speaker's Eye.' The Royal and distinguished audience numbered from three to four hundred, and I never played before a more enthusiastic house. They took every point, and both laughed and applauded heartily. There is an idea, I fancy, among some people, that it is not etiquette to enjoy yourself too much in the presence of Royalty. I can only say that it is not my experience; I never heard heartier laughter than at Sandringham, nor, under its influence, I think, ever played with greater enjoyment; and I believe every member of my company felt the same. On our third visit to Sandringham we played *Going It* and *The Birthplace of Podgers*.

"I think I may say, without being impertinent, that there is something very winning in the Prince's manners, and he is very considerate and happy in his courtesies. Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales is as unaffected as she is gracious, and altogether I should think the Sandringham household is a model of domestic peace and happiness. It is the type of the best English life, and the host and hostess seem to be inspired in all they do by the best English traditions."

VIII.

"I AM reminded, while speaking of the Prince, of an incident of my being somewhat nervous in the presence of Royalty in Scotland. Colonel Farquharson had often invited me to visit him at Invercauld, a lovely place a little beyond Balmoral. I had much wished to do so, but for a long time no opportunity offered. At last I was playing at Aberdeen, when what is called 'a preaching night' intervened, and gave me a night off. I telegraphed Colonel Farquharson to this effect, and said I had

a couple of friends with me: they were Lowne and my manager, Loveday. He replied, 'Bring them, and come to Invercauld; shall be delighted to receive you.'

"We travelled to Ballater by rail, and from thence we drove to Invercauld. We had just passed Abergeldie, the Prince's place, when, in a very narrow road, we met Her Majesty walking with one or two of her sons, and attended by several gillies. The Queen had to stop for us to go by. We uncovered and paid all due respect and reverence to Her Majesty, who smiled, bowed, and we went on our way.

"At Invercauld, after luncheon, we went out on ponies, attended by gillies. We had not gone very far when one of the party said, 'Here's Her Majesty coming!' and, sure enough, the Queen came along. This time she was driving. It was now our turn to stand aside while the Queen passed us, and the gillies gracefully reined up their steeds. I am not much of a horseman; I tried, however, to imitate one to the best of my ability; thought of Mazeppa and other performers of my youth, and felt a little uncertain as to my powers of reining in a Scotch pony. However, I did my best; as also did Lowne and Loveday. The Queen smiled, and I am sure she must have thought we were three awful guys.

"We were invited to chase the wild deer, but ventured to decline this mark of hospitality, although I brought home with me several fine examples of big game, one of which, of course, you've noticed in the hall, and there is another at the theatre. Unsophisticated guests of mine are sometimes induced to believe that they are reminiscences of my sporting proclivities; but some people never seem quite to understand when you are joking and when you are not. It was no joke

reining up that spirited pony at Invercauld in the presence of Royalty, I can tell you."

IX.

"I RECALL an interesting little party given by Mr. Gilbert Farquhar, at the office of Bell's Telephone, in Cannon Street, in March, 1878. That was the first great public test, if you remember, of the telephone in this country. The wire was laid to Windsor, and the Queen graciously condescended to preside over these first popular manifestations. The party at our end of the telephone, in Cannon Street, included the late Prince Imperial, who came up from Chislehurst for the occasion; the Duchess of Westminster and daughter; the Countess De la Warr, the Marchesa Sauturée, Mrs. Langtry, Mrs. Cornwallis West, Lord Dorchester, Lady D. Neville, Lord De Clifford, Mr. Hamilton Aide, and Miss Kate Field—who, by the way, was personally interested in the business features of Bell's Telephone. She sang a ballad for the Royal ear, and I was induced to speak a little French from a certain popular comedy of mine.

"The Prince Imperial, a very charming and interesting young fellow, came to the Gaiety a few nights afterwards to see me in *Ici on parle Français*, and was brought round to my room, where we had a pleasant chat. He said he had come to take a lesson in French, and was very genial and unaffected."

X.

"DURING his illness poor Byron was staying at Hastings, having a quiet, lazy, reflective time. I used to send him curious parcels of things. I happened to be in Nottingham Market-Place, and bought him all kinds of samples of everything out

of the market, making up a miscellaneous hamper. I knew that it would amuse him to unpack them. The incongruity of the contents would tickle his fancy, and I always put in a few trifles that might be useful to the landlady. Every little cheap thing in the market I think I purchased one day. I had a charming letter from him, describing the unpacking of the hamper, his own amusement, and the delight of the landlady, to whose *cuisine* I at least added variety.

"In this letter he spoke of his languor and lassitude, his desire for quiet, and of the narrow escape he had had of a visit from a sort of physical thunderbolt. He was sitting at the window, looking through the venetian blinds, when he saw C—— enter the gate in front, just in time to say he was not at home; otherwise the next moment there would have been, as he said, a sort of Punch-and-Judy-man business — a thundering knock at the door, a rush and tramp, a tramp and rush, upstairs into his room, a tremendous, vigorous shake of the hand, and a loud, cheery, noisy voice shouting, 'Rooty-too! Here we are! How are you, my boy! Glad to find you: only just heard you were in Hastings,' &c.

"He said he had been reading the local newspaper, and was very much amused with the criticism of the theatre, in which the writer said Miss Sarah Thorne's *Wages of Sin* was a little too heavy for Hastings.

"Poor Byron! most of his good things have been printed; but you were speaking of the spontaneity of his wit and the geniality of his humour. I don't remember any new illustration of this, except a very small one; but it is very characteristic of our dear old friend. It was the very week before he died. I was sitting by his bed, when Mrs. Byron said, 'So-and-So has called

for a character.' The So-and-So was a manservant, who had lived with him some years. Byron was talking business with me, and was a trifle impatient. 'I did not want to be disturbed just now,' he said; 'I am willing to give him a character, of course, but what sort of a character does he want, a bad one or a good one?' He turned to me and smiled as he asked this question, and as he did when answering an application from his groom, who reported that one of his horses was ill—should he give it a ball—he wrote, 'Yes, give it a ball, but don't ask too many.'

"I remember once calling for Byron at the Criterion Theatre during the run of *The American Lady*. I said, 'We are going to sup at the club.' Byron proposed we should wait for Mr. Hingston, the manager. We did. After considerable delay, I said, 'Why does he not come? What is he doing?' 'Oh, he's waiting to try and remember if there's anything else he can forget besides our appointment,' said Byron.

"Yes, there are a lot of good stories of Byron," Toole continued; "that about Woodin, who used in his entertainment to go down beneath his rostrum and come up as a countryman, a prima donna, a soldier, a policeman; it was his polygraphic entertainment, you know: well, at times he was rather a bore, and Byron one night said, 'I wish he would go down and come up somebody else altogether.'

"And that is a little like what he said about Creswick, who was Sheppard's partner at the Surrey. 'Creswick has come back from Australia,' some one said to Byron; 'looks first rate; he has come back quite another man.' 'Hope he hasn't come back Sheppard,' said Byron.

"On another occasion—"

"Time's up," I said, "a page of type is not telescopic nor elastic; and we have come to the last; I regret it; and if the reader is sorry that the end has come, then your *Reminiscences* have been a great success."

"Thanks to you—"

"Not at all," I said, interrupting him, "thanks to the subject. We have had a pleasant time."

"Very: I hate saying good-bye."

"The best of friends must part," I suggest.

"Not necessarily for good. Can't we make it '*Au revoir*'?"

"If you prefer it."

"I do. Although we have finished the *Reminiscences*, they will run at the Libraries, as a good play runs at the theatres—eh?"

"I hope so,"

"And when the first long run is over, the book will still be open; it will be a permanent show, so to speak. Is it arrogant to think so?"

"I hope not."

"I only want a sufficient excuse to avoid saying, 'Good-bye.'"

"Then I will write down the pleasant words, '*Au revoir*!'"

"Thanks; and while I say it, taking the reader's hand as it were, I would like to recall the many kind favours I have received at the hands of pleasant people in the provinces, and the gratifying social enjoyments they have afforded me. I do not in this refer to notable dinners at clubs and hotels, nor to public receptions, but to the quiet, home-like places where one is received into the bosom of a cultivated family, whose sympathies are with the drama, who love the stage for the good there is in it, and who appreciate the efforts of actors who respect and uphold their calling. There are, thank

goodness, such families in every city ; but there is one I am more particularly thinking of at the present moment,—that of Dr. Pryde, of Edinburgh, a very learned but simple-minded man, with a broad and deep knowledge of the literature of the English stage, and a sincere admiration for the great artists who have interpreted it. He and his charming wife are always more or less associated, in my mind, with 'The Vicar of Wakefield.' They are devoted to Irving, and when I last saw them were talking with intense pleasure of *Olivia* and his later work. They always go to the play, mostly with their daughters, and it has generally happened to me, once at least during my Edinburgh engagements, to go home with them to supper ; upon which occasions the daughters have sat up, and evidently enjoyed the conversation about the theatre, the higher purposes of the drama, the famous actors the Doctor had seen and known, the remarkable career of Mr. Irving, the old days of Edinburgh playgoing, and so on. And one always pauses to think that if the more cultured people of a city were liberal in their patronage of the drama, nothing would tend more to elevate the stage, and improve the character of the pieces performed, compelling humorists to be wholesome and pure in their fun, and the more serious dramatists and actors to be equally true in their pathos."

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